

3d artist

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting
Magazine | Issue 077 May 2012

Cover Image by Patipat Asavasena

Interview

Luca Gabriele Rossetti

Articles

Sketchbook of

George Guo

The Gallery

Michal Matczak, Chaichan

Artwichai, plus more!

Patipat Asavasena

continues his fantastic series on Manga Historical Characters, and this month brings us his latest creation, Joan of Arc.

JOAN OF ARC



Designing Droids

Ignacio Bazan Lazcano goes into great detail as he talks us through the creation of his amazing image, the Bartender Droid.



Painting Creatures from Mythology

Christopher Peters (Photoshop) and **Simon Dominic** (Painter) tackle the Jiang Shi and each give us their take on the mysterious creature.



Dreamscape

In this chapter of the brilliant Dreamscape series, **Jama Jurabaev** shows us how he and his team incorporated live footage into this short movie.



Editorial

Welcome to the May issue of 2D Artist magazine! In this issue we continue inspiring you with excellent tutorial series and amazing you with stunning artwork. From manga characters to creating amazing animations, using paintings and live-action footage, there's something for everyone!

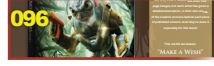
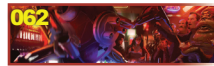
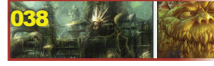
There are so many great tutorials in this month's magazine that it's hard to know where to begin. I'll start with the awesome cover image by **Patipat Asavasena**, who's also the artist guiding us through our new manga series. In the second chapter, with help from Joan of Arc, he'll be showing us the techniques character artists use to achieve the manga style.

In April's magazine **Jama Jurabaev** explained how he developed his storyboards and concepts for the high quality matte painting backdrops he used for his Dreamscape video. This time around he gets to the exciting part, where he shares practical tips and shows us how he filmed the live footage, which he will composite into his amazing images in next month's issue!

We also continue our droid series with **Ignacio Bazan Lazcano** creating probably my favorite type of droid, the bartender droid! He talks us through his concept and initial ideas, developing his chosen design, producing technical drawings and even shows us how he placed his droid into a supporting environment.

Moving on to our next series, Mythological Creatures, we are in the capable hands of **Simon Dominic Brewer** and **Christopher Peters** this month, as they tackle the mysterious Jiang Shi, otherwise known as a Chinese "hopping" vampire/zombie. We knew that this would be an interesting illustration as this creature leaps around, killing living things and sucking the life force out of them! Take a closer look to find out how each of our artists interpret the same brief and come up with their own unique versions of this charming creature, Simon in Painter and Christopher in Photoshop.

If that's not enough for you, we also feature a Making Of by the mystical **Jenny Healy**, an interview with senior matte painter **Luca Gabriele Rossetti** and a sketchbook that gives an insight into the creative mind of concept artist, **George Guo**. And, of course, our brilliant gallery featuring work by **Oleg Leshiy Shekhovtsov**, **Saeed Ramezani**, **Chaichan Artwichai** and many more talented artists.



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Image by Luca Gabriele Rossetti



Get the most out of your Magazine!

If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature in this magazine, follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader!

Setting up your PDF reader

For optimum viewing of the magazine it is recommended that you have the latest Acrobat Reader installed.

You can download it for free here: [DOWNLOAD!](#)

To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2D Artist magazine, you can set the reader to display 'two-up', which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

1. Open the magazine in Reader;
2. Go to the **View** menu, then **Page display**;
3. Select **Two-up Continuous**, making sure that **Show Cover Page** is also selected.



Contributing Artists

Every month many artists from around the world contribute to **3DCreative** and **2DArtist** magazines. Here you can find out a bit more about them! If you would like to be a part of **3DCreative** or **2DArtist** magazine, please contact: simon@3dtotal.com



Luca Gabriele Rossetti

Luca G. Rossetti is a digital artist from Italy. Since Luca was a kid, he was always fascinated by sci-fi, art and VFX.

Today Luca holds positions as a senior lead digital compositor, VFX supervisor and a Sr. Matte Painter. He specialized in Digital Matte Painting, with a particular interest in combining photo real 2D art with 3D models. Luca is also a passionate writer.

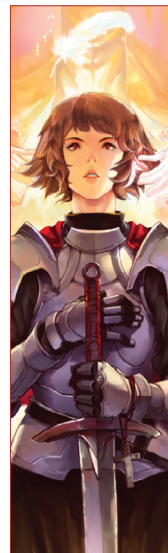
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George Guo

George Guo is currently working at an online game company in Shanghai, China. George specializes in game concept design and illustration art, he has many hobbies, especially military, history and paleontology. George also participates in many MMO and next generation projects, and is engaged in illustration and video design work in his own time.

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Patipat Asavasena

Patipat Asavasena is a graduated engineer, but he decided to follow his passion in art. Currently, he's a full-time freelance artist living in Nonthaburi, Thailand. His work has been influenced by Japanese manga, but also has a wide-range of styles and is very interested in art, photography and technology.

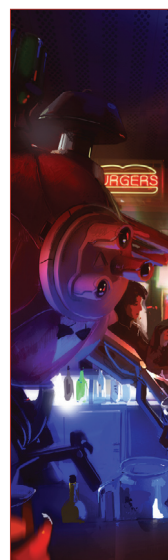
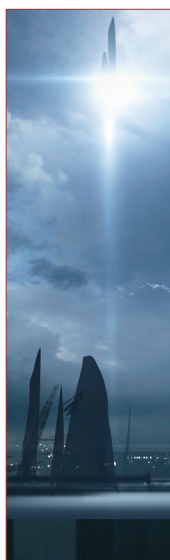
<http://asuka111.net/>
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Jama Jurabaev

After Jama's graduation as an aerospace engineer in 2004 he never thought that his life will be spent working with digital art. But now he is working as a concept artist, and digital art has totally consumed his life. He has done a lot of illustrations for advertising agencies in the past and recently secured a position at MPC in London.

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Ignacio Bazan Lazcano

Lives in the beautiful city of Buenos Aires where he has been working for four years in the games industry as an illustrator and concept artist.

He currently works for TimeGate Studios where his tasks include developing the aesthetics of the game from the beginning of the process. In the future he'd like for Argentina to become well-known for its artistic talent.

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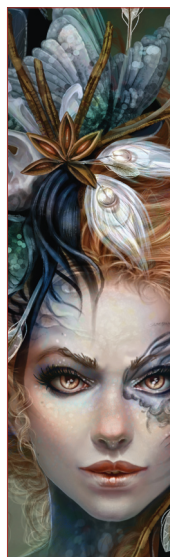
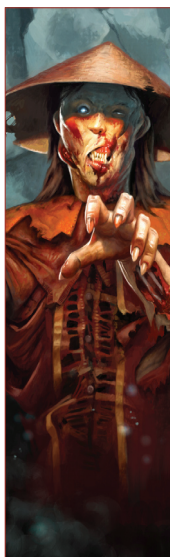
Simon Dominic

Simon is a freelance illustrator specializing in fantasy, sci-fi, horror and the generally bizarre.

He paints digitally, applying traditional techniques through use of digital tools. He has worked on game art, book covers, editorial and magazine workshops since going pro in 2009.

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Jenny Healy

From even the early days Jenny has always loved strange, offbeat, beautiful, and slightly melancholy things. Something about the mixed grabbed her.

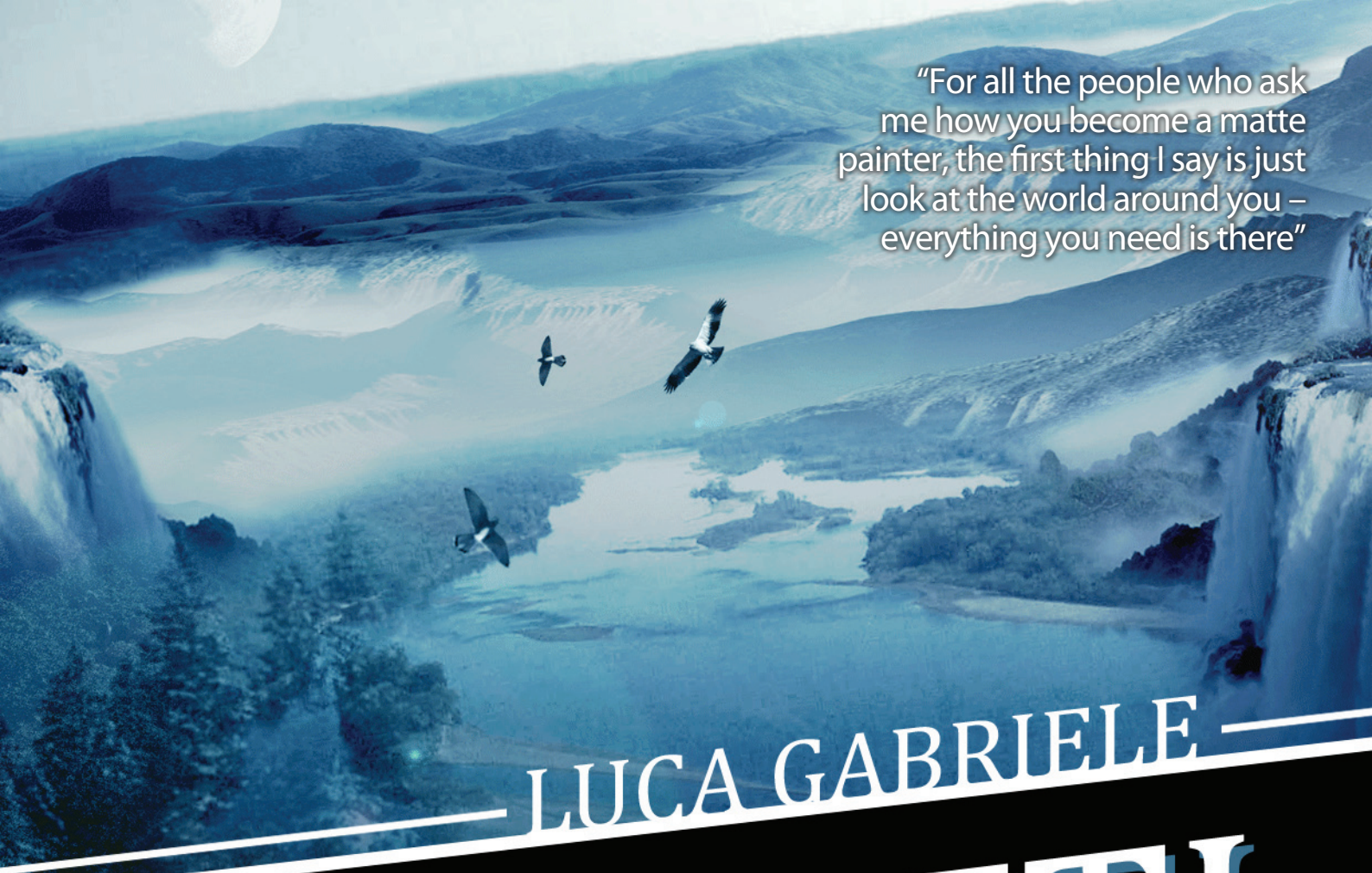
In 2009 Jenny discovered digital painting and a newfound passion for the medium. It's been her favored medium ever since.

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myjennlee@hotmail.com




Image by Ignacio Bazan Lazcano



"For all the people who ask me how you become a matte painter, the first thing I say is just look at the world around you – everything you need is there"

— LUCA GABRIELE — — ROSSETTI —

An encounter with a traditional matte painter on the original *Star Wars* inspired Luca Gabriele Rossetti to change his career path and the rest, as they say, is history. Years later and he's a successful matte painter currently working on a number of Hollywood blockbusters and we caught up with him recently to find out more about his life and works

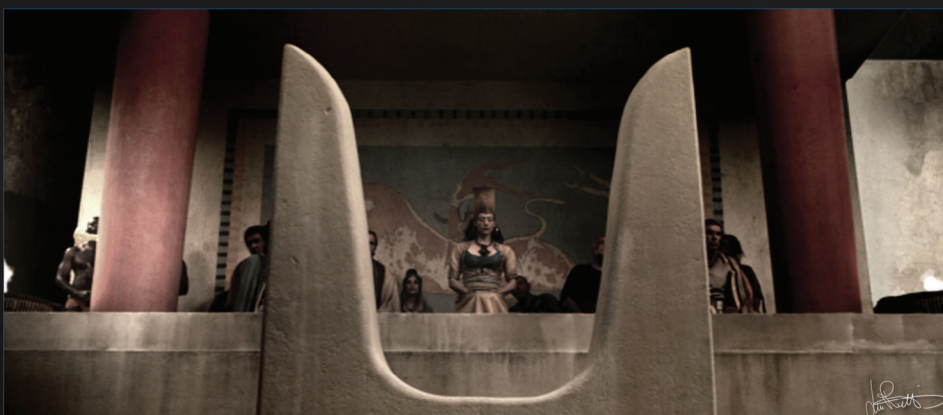


Hi Luca, welcome to the world of 3DTotal and thanks for agreeing to chat to me today. So it's 2012 and you're a senior matte painter on some seriously mainstream movies like *47 Ronin*, *Lockout* and *Snow White and the Huntsman* – and probably the envy of lots of people reading this! Do you ever look back on your artistic journey and have to pinch yourself to check you're not dreaming? And where did that artistic journey actually start?

Well, that's a good question. Yes, I do indeed still pinch myself a lot, and I'm proud of what I've done in my career. But you definitely need to keep improving because I still feel like I have much more to prove. Like everyone else, I want to be a part of this amazing world that's so rich with creativity and aspirations. To enable personal dreams to come true, you need to work very hard. Sometimes it can be tough and you want to give up; sometimes you lose your energy and just think, maybe I've done things wrong, but it's all worth it in the end when you take a step back from everything and realize there is nothing that can give you so much satisfaction as producing something you value.

"I want to be a part of this amazing world that's so rich with creativity and aspirations"

My journey started as an editor, working at that time for a post-production company in Italy, where I'm from. After a while, I did a stage in telecine at a film company and it was there that I discovered a wonderful machine called Inferno. That was the beginning of my compositing career, which I spent several years doing. Compositing was cool, but throughout I had always been fascinated by matte paintings. One day, the father of a friend of mine, a traditional matte painter involved in great movies like *Star Wars*, showed me some work. "Oh, good lord," I said to myself, "maybe I need to think about doing this, I just love it!" That was the time I started to study paintings; I needed to make money out of this new passion. I wasn't great at the beginning, so I kept working in compositing until the day I was ready to prove I was able to do some professional work as a painter.



In fact, compositing is something that works very well with matte painting, especially recently with the new tools that have developed involving camera projections and 2.5D environments, skipping long rendering times. Now that I work as a matte painter, I feel that, in general, it has been very useful coming from a compositing background.

Wow, it must have been amazing to get to see some original work from a movie like *Star Wars*! As sources of inspiration go, that's a good one [Laughs]. But still, changing the direction of your career and learning something completely new is a daunting task – how did you go about it? Were you self-taught or did you have any formal training?

As I said, in my case, it was important just to be in the field in any way possible – my passion drove me to work hard. Of course, I did have some training, starting in Italy with the only certified Softimage 3D school at that time. Then, as I grew up I changed to another training course and then went abroad, always wanting more and more throughout. Today our planet is

tinier than before in that we can fly around the globe so easily and there are so many schools all over the world that can help drive people in their chosen direction – which is brilliant, isn't it?

Definitely! Now, I'm a big fan of matte paintings, so having an excuse to browse your website was a delight. I just find there's something so epic and beautiful about landscapes and scenes – I look at them and instantly want to visit the places depicted (even if I know they're not real). Have you got a piece or project you're particularly proud of, or that conjures up particularly strong memories?

The film, *Conan the Barbarian*, was my most important and greatest challenge. *Conan* was not an easy movie to manage, especially when working on a character that has such a cult status. It's always a bit difficult to satisfy the critics. When I started the job, I had to figure out how much work we had to do and trust me, I was shocked by the amount of sequences. But then afterwards I said to myself, "I reckon this is one of the best experiences I could be having. I must do it."



Dylan Cole was the virtual environment supervisor on the movie, driving us with 14 establishing shots designed to capture the mood and atmosphere of the whole movie. The world of Hyboria is a mixture of mystical elements and ancient civilizations. It is a place where magic is still alive and strong; where we find traces of lost worlds, forgotten but still there in some ways, with giant colossus heads smashed into the ground, hidden dungeons, etc. We did tons of sketches for *Conan*; the art department there was awesome. I had a team of really amazing artists. In just a couple of hours, they could draw three or four different sketches, each rich with detail and fantastic elements.

The whole movie is set in so many different places. We see Messantia, easily the greatest sea port in all the Hyborian kingdoms, which acts as a home to thousands of seafarers every day, including the fierce Barachan pirates at times. Then there is the city of Argalon, which could be compared to Sodoma and Gomorra. Other environments range from the Shaipur monastery to the fallen kingdom of Acheron and the ancient Skull Cave. Even at sparse locations that feel like they're in the middle of nowhere, with ruins of a distant world spread all over

the ground, you can feel a kind of magic and element of the supernatural all the time, in every single frame.

It was a real challenge and none of us were prepared for the quantity of work. However, it was such a privilege to be part of the project, and now that the work is complete, I can say that we did a really good job. I must say thank you to all of those involved for the great time we had together.

“The important thing is to look forward, learn from your mistakes and try to do better next time”

Conan sounds like an intense project – looking back, is there anything you would have done differently to maybe make it more manageable? And what was it like working with someone of the quality of Dylan Cole?

Well, any time you look back on a project, there are always aspects that could have been improved, but we are not able to go back in time! The important thing is to look forward, learn from your mistakes and try to do better next time.

Dylan is an artist, a great one, and he's also a very good all-round manager, which is the perfect mix. He is very polite and smart. I don't know if I will have another opportunity to work with him in the future, but if so, it would be really great to again.

For those who might not know a lot about the role of a matte painter or concept artist, could you just walk us through what the job entails? How do you go about starting a matte painting or piece of concept work and what are the important elements?

Matte painting is an old VFX technique that has been used since the early days of cinema. Originally, it was an environment or set extension painted in glass, with a matte or “alpha” that helped make the way it blended with the real scenario more believable. Nowadays, it's completely digital and used for photoreal 2D painting, as well as making 3D renderings more realistic.

The roles of a matte painter and concept artist regularly overlap, and usually a matte painter will perform both roles. A concept is the early forms of a scene coming straight from your imagination. It should be full of elements



with the proper mood to help establish the atmosphere and the look. Concepts are not just black and white sketches or drawings; they are a proper scene giving you all the feelings you need to convey. They then become matte paintings later, when you start to build the proper elements based on the concept in a high resolution with all the details you need. In both cases, there are some important rules in order to create a successful piece: perspective, scale, light and shadows, and a balanced parallax between the objects. For all the people who ask me how you become a matte painter, the first thing I say is just look at the world around you – everything you need is there. Train yourself to

copy the real world and then include your own fantastical elements. Techniques are easy to learn and there are a lot of books and tutorials, but you need a keen eye.

Stepping away from movies and matte paintings for a moment, what other kind of work have you done during your career? I believe you've been involved in lots of TV commercials for some pretty high-profile clients? What was that experience like and how does working in the TV industry differ from working in movies?

Timing is the key difference, especially if, like I was, you're working as a Flame/Inferno artist.

Commercials are quick and it can take a few days to achieve the result. Sometimes you work really hard for long hours just because you have no time. Television is different because if you're working on a big TV series the timings could be longer. But sometimes it's quite similar to the commercial process. Working on feature films is totally different; you spend a good stretch of time on the pre-visualization of ideas. It can then become hard when you start working for the deadlines to pull out the shots.

Do you prefer working in film or TV? Judging by your latest credits I'm going to go with film, but you could surprise me!





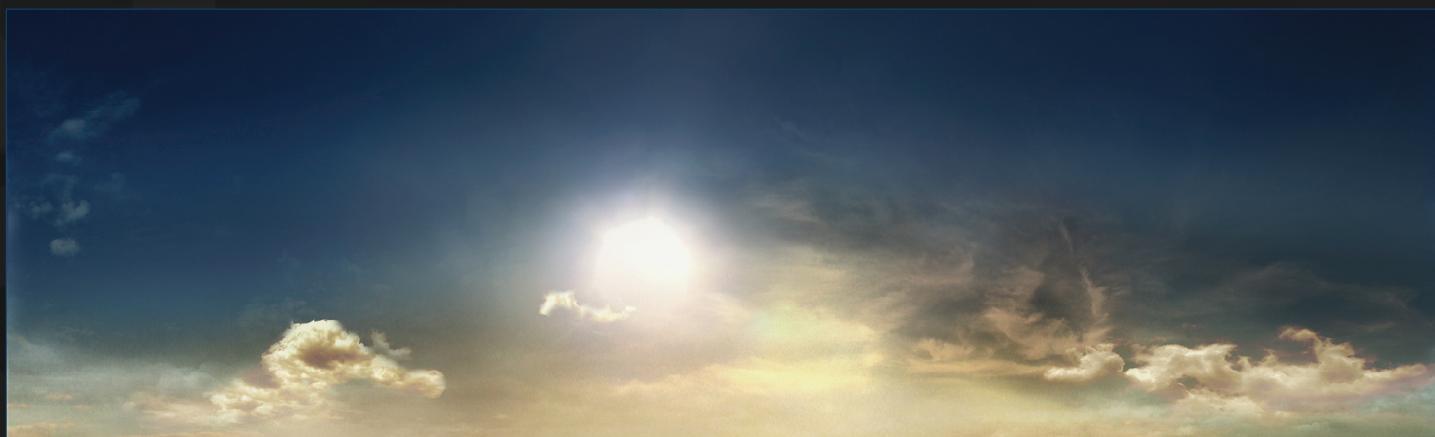


You're right, I prefer feature films, rather than TV series. Unless it's a very good TV series!

I believe you're a member of the Visual Effects Society, is that right? Can you tell us more about the society and your role in it?

Being a member of the VES is a great privilege and it gives me an opportunity to be proud of my work. The VES is an institution that tries to improve our work and create a great standard across the whole visual effect industry. It helps bring people together from all over the world, encouraging communication in this field. As a member you can follow meetings, blogs and





events that all enable the world of visual effects to progress. Their website is also a great place to discover and remember the old masters.

One last question to round things off: if you could work on any project, either a past, present or future one, what would it be?

There is one project that I reckon will never come up, unfortunately. It's a sequel or maybe prequel to *Blade Runner*, one of the icons of sci-fi and the whole history of cinema. I love R. Scott's work. He is a great visionary and an excellent director, able to create incredible atmospheres. *Blade Runner* itself is full of astonishing ideas. But that's just hoping...

Luca Gabriele Rossetti

Email: lgr@lgr-digitalworks.com

Interviewed by: Jo Hargreaves





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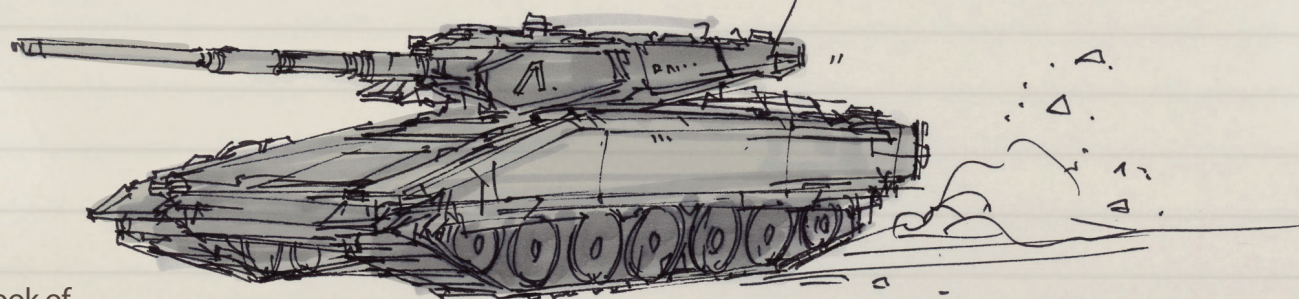
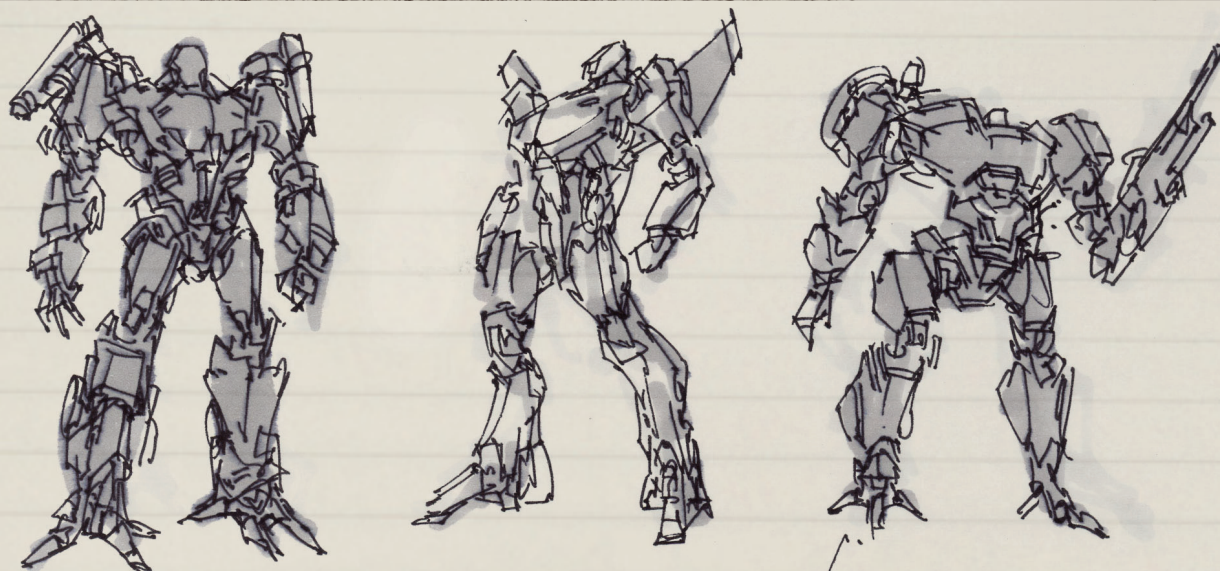
Meet modo.
Luxology

"I am a big fan of nature
and biology so I like to
draw a lot of monsters and
strange creatures"



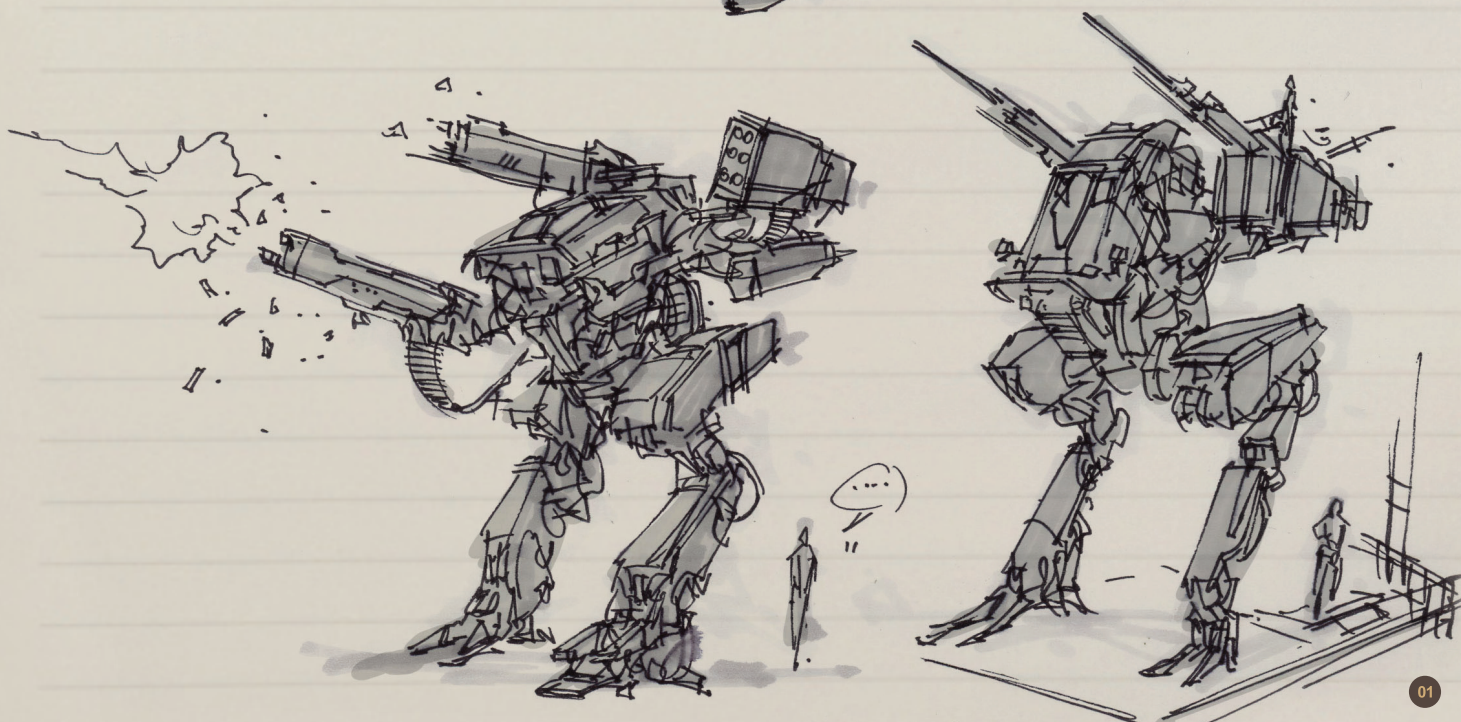
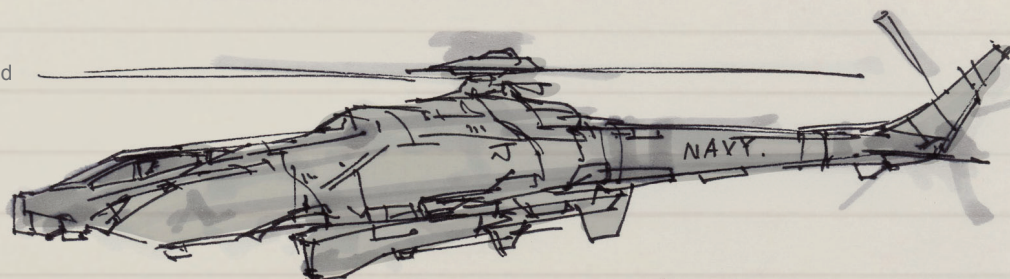
SKETCHBOOK of George Guo

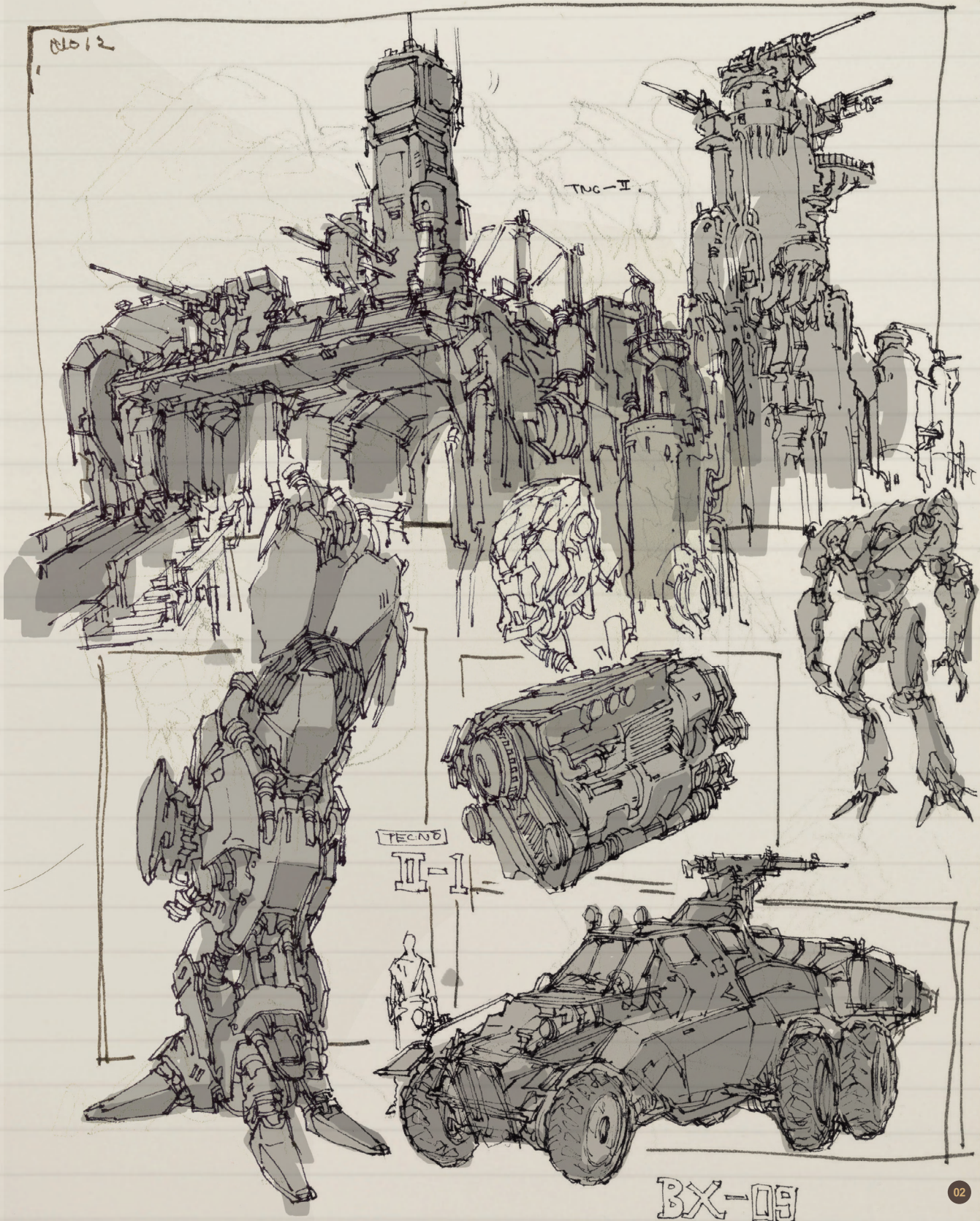
This month's sketchbook shows professional concept artist George Guo's fantasy fighters and war-torn worlds. With the use of inks and pencil, he shows us how every project starts with a mass of sketches.



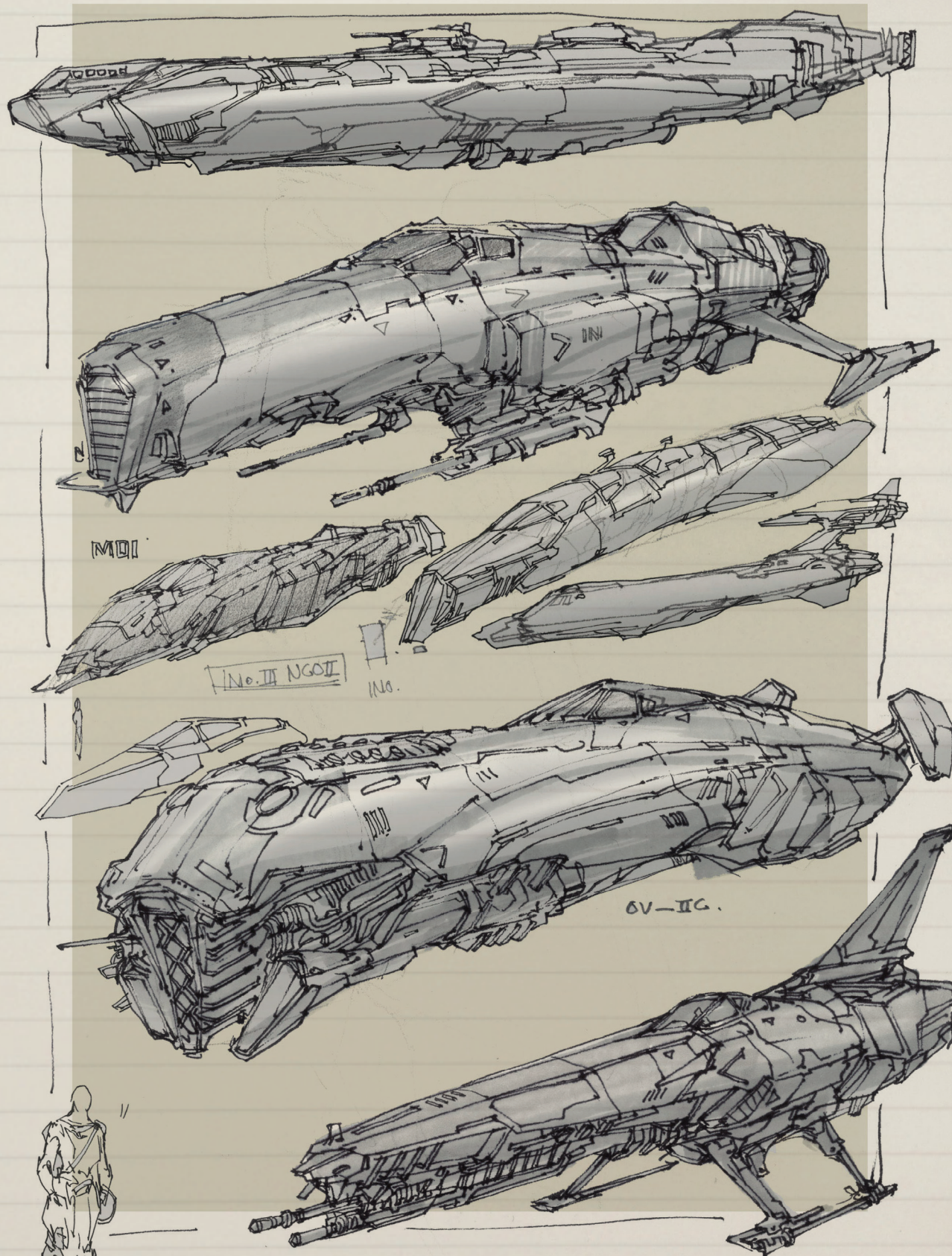
Sketchbook of George Guo

Fig.01 shows some walking machines and mechs, which were quite heavily inspired by *Avatar* and *Transformers*. I tend to sketch a lot after seeing a good movie.

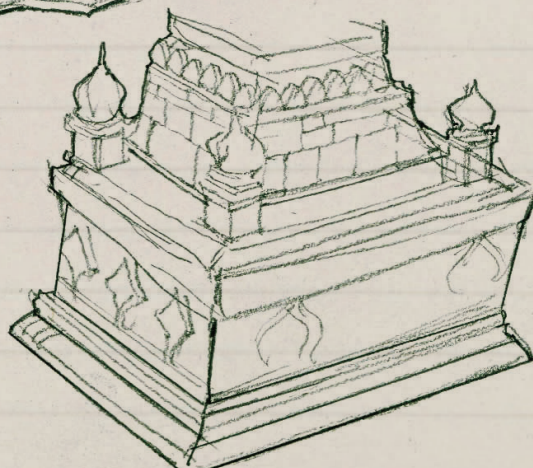




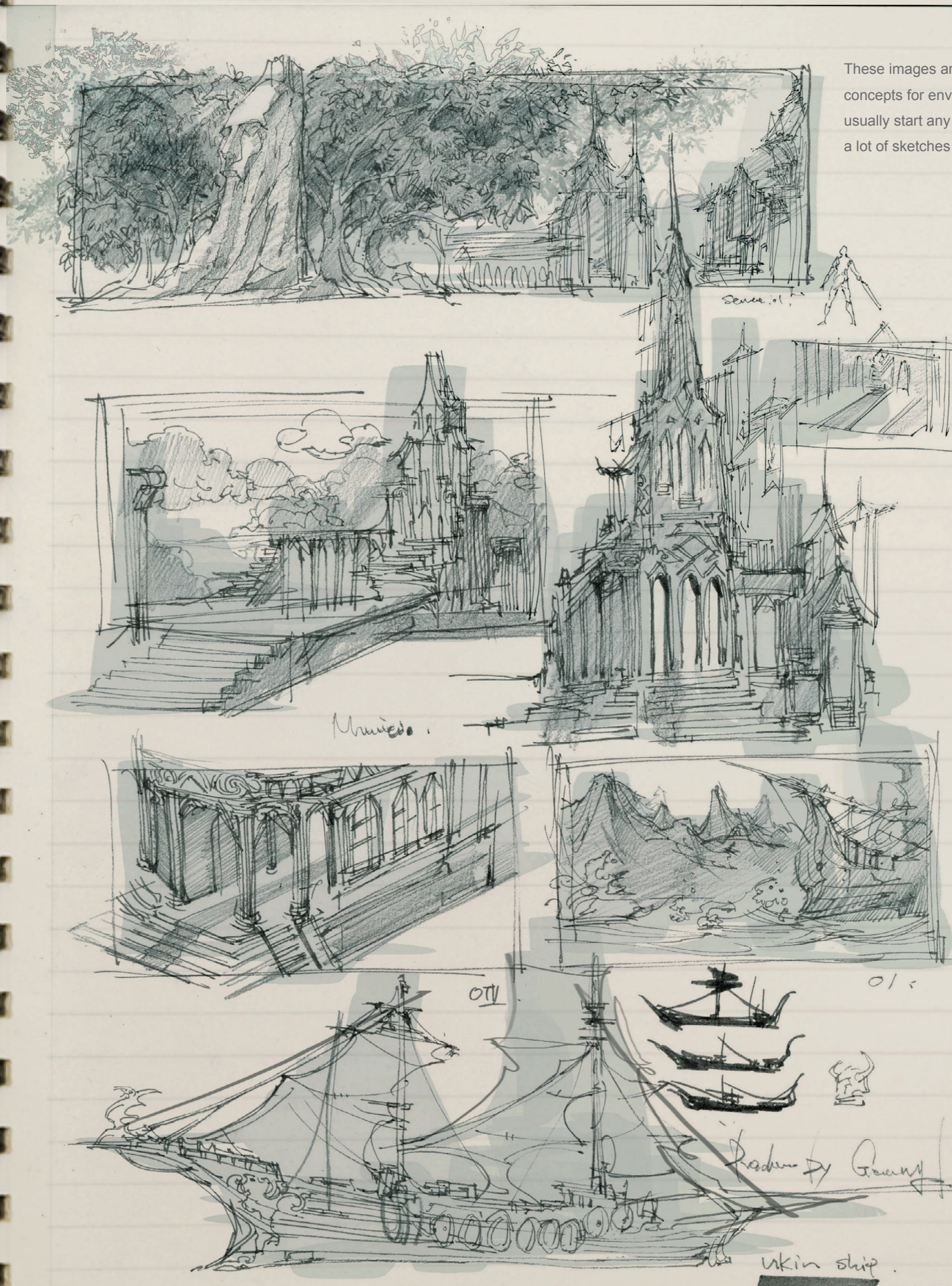
I kept thinking about some ideas for a sci-fi story so I drew these sketches of buggys and other tech machinery (Fig.02).

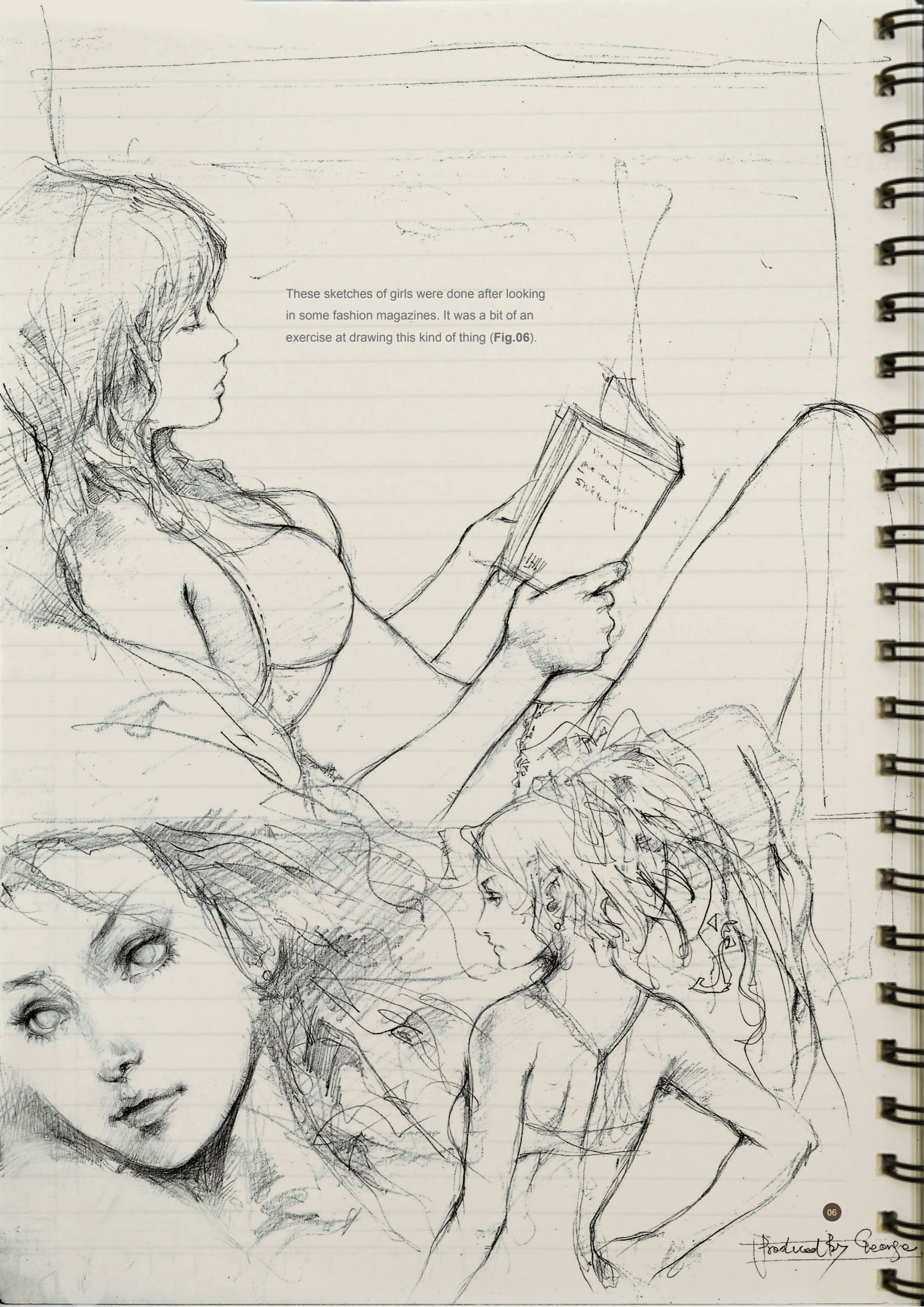


These are some concepts for sci-fi vehicles and spaceships. I wanted them to look fast, but also maintain a military appearance (Fig.03).



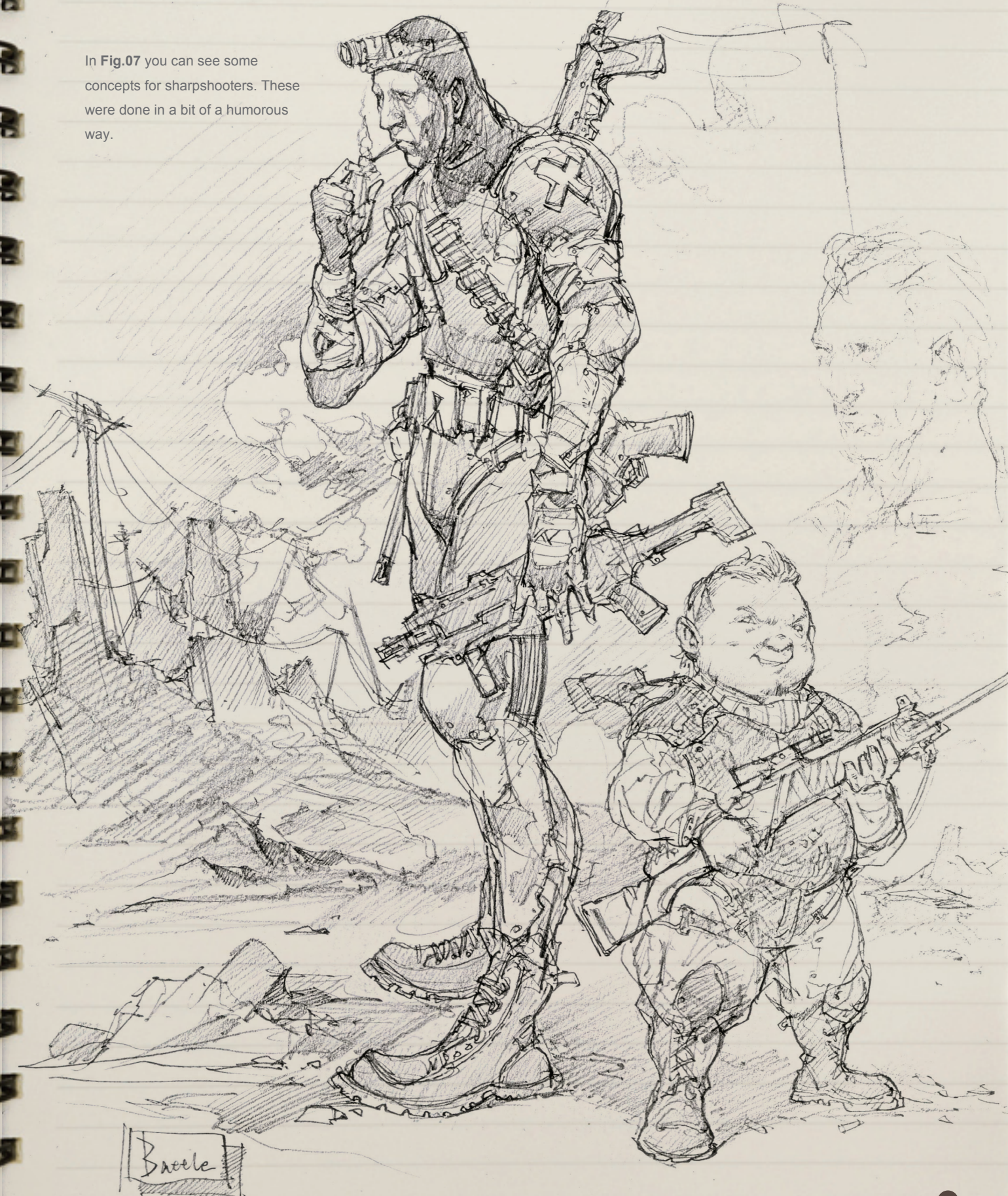
These are sketches for environments for the Angkor-themed MMO that I mentioned before (Fig.04).





These sketches of girls were done after looking in some fashion magazines. It was a bit of an exercise at drawing this kind of thing (Fig.06).

In Fig.07 you can see some concepts for sharpshooters. These were done in a bit of a humorous way.

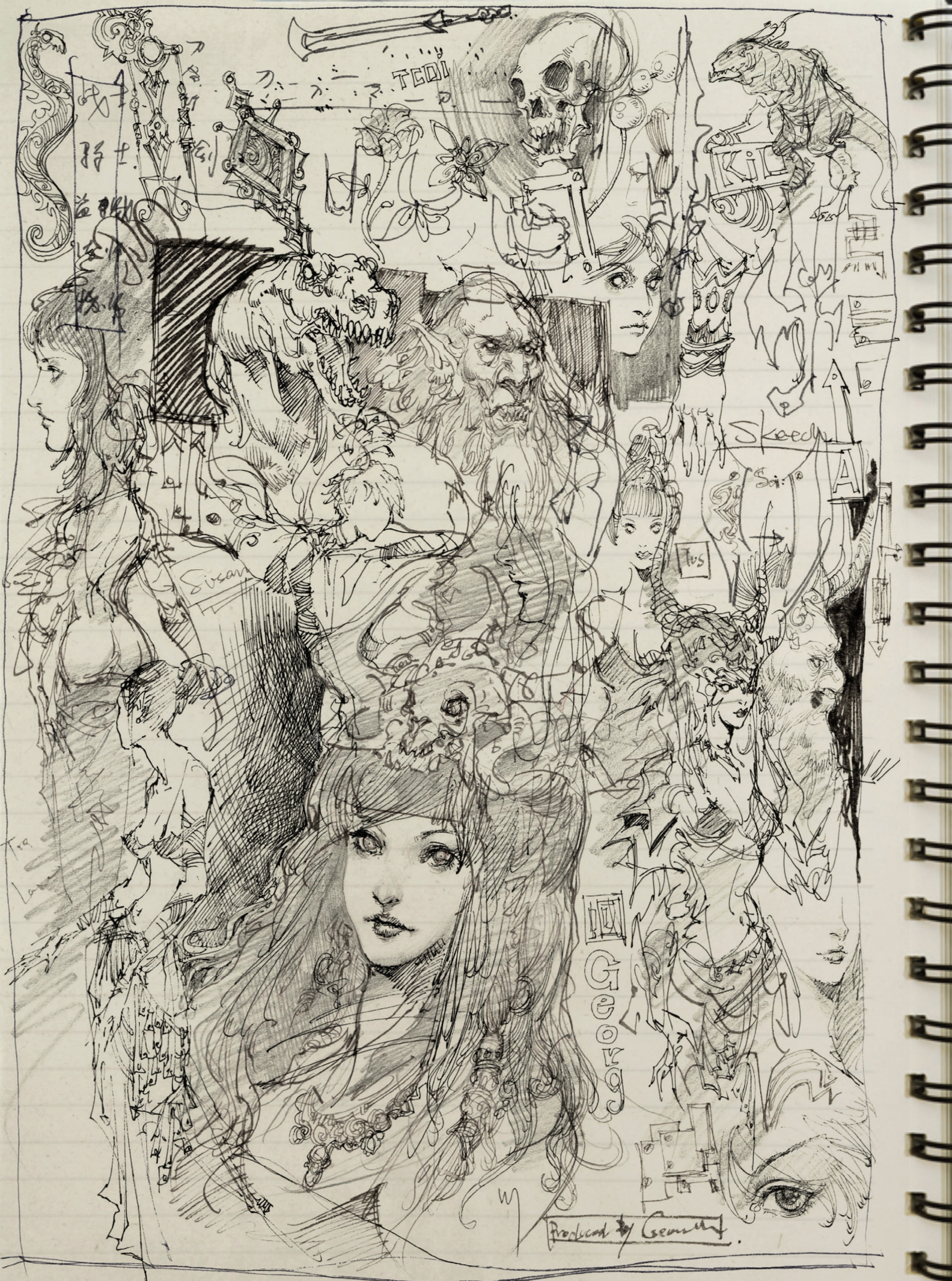




I use the same process of starting with a lot of sketches when working on characters for a project (Fig.08).

This character is influenced by images of Mongolian warriors. He is supposed to be a Mongolian general who is a good leader. I tried to imply that he was good in both his face and the clothes he wore (Fig.09).





In Fig.10 you can see a selection of sketches done in both ink and pencil. I combine these tools fairly often as it can produce some unexpected results.

These are some concepts I did on the theme of Beauty and the Beast. I really liked this theme, but have always thought that the beast should be stronger and more dangerous (Fig.11).

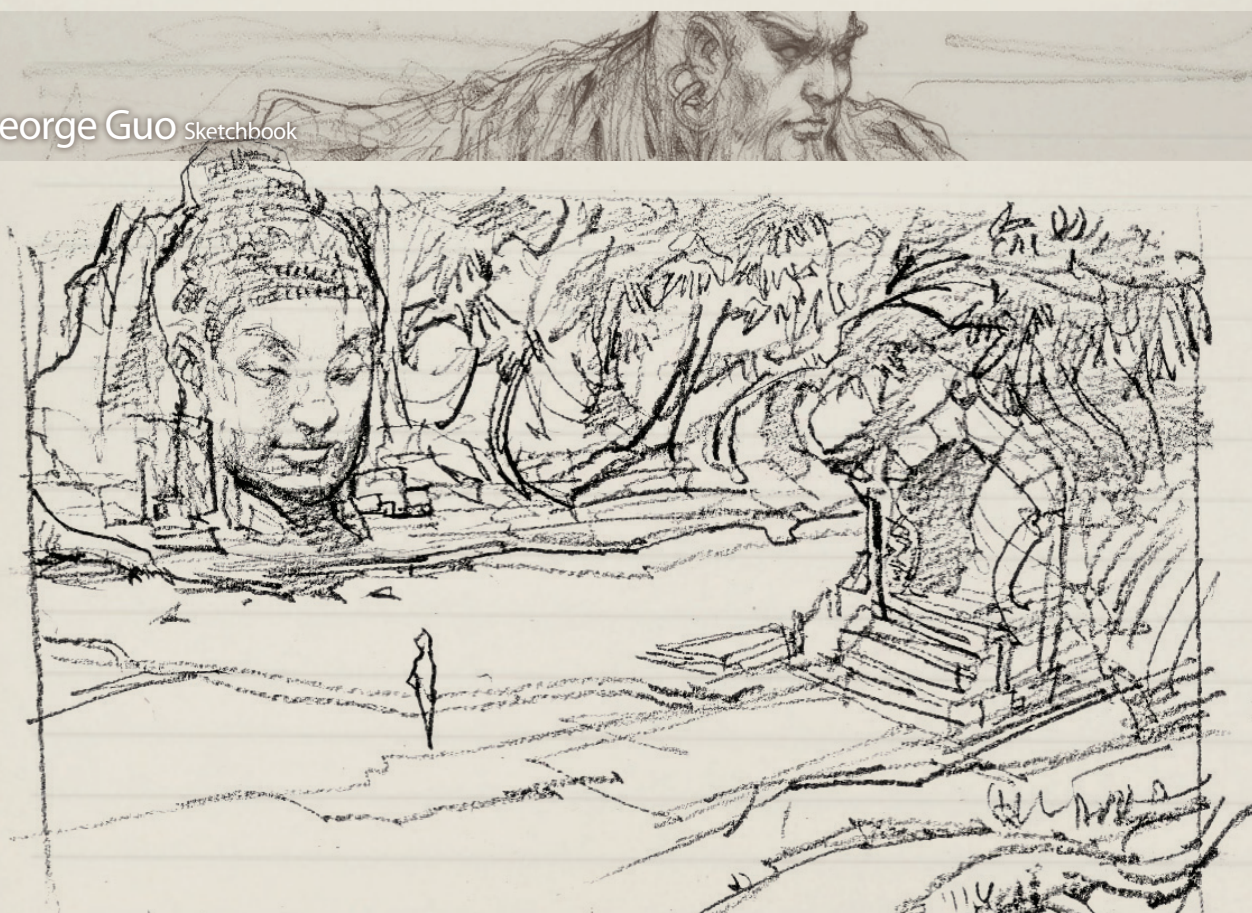
Susanita

fuu.

Beast Man

This is another design for Beauty and the Beast, but this time I gave it more of an adult feeling (Fig.12).





果阿伽耶



Fig.13 shows a character that is based on relics found in Angkor. He was designed for an MMO. I particularly liked the way he looked as a sketch in pencil.

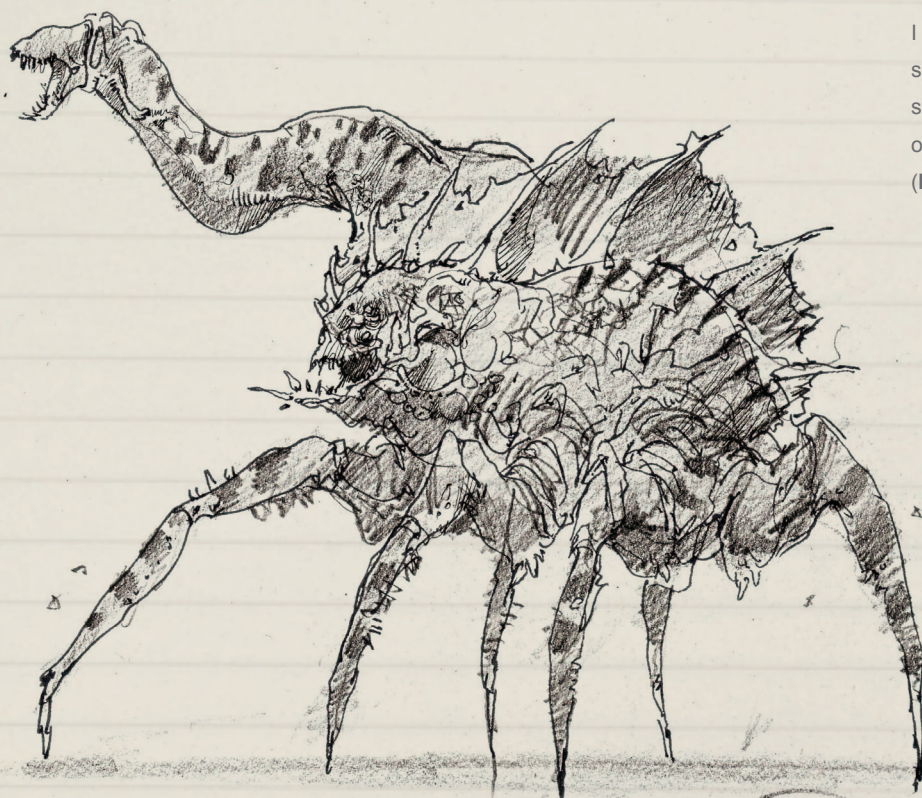




In Fig.15 you can see a big fantasy-style fighter that looks like he has come from the Middle Ages. I draw a lot of these sorts of images because I enjoy drawing them.



I had just been reading some fairy tales when I drew the sketches in **Fig.16**. I suddenly felt the urge to draw some of the characters that I had read about.



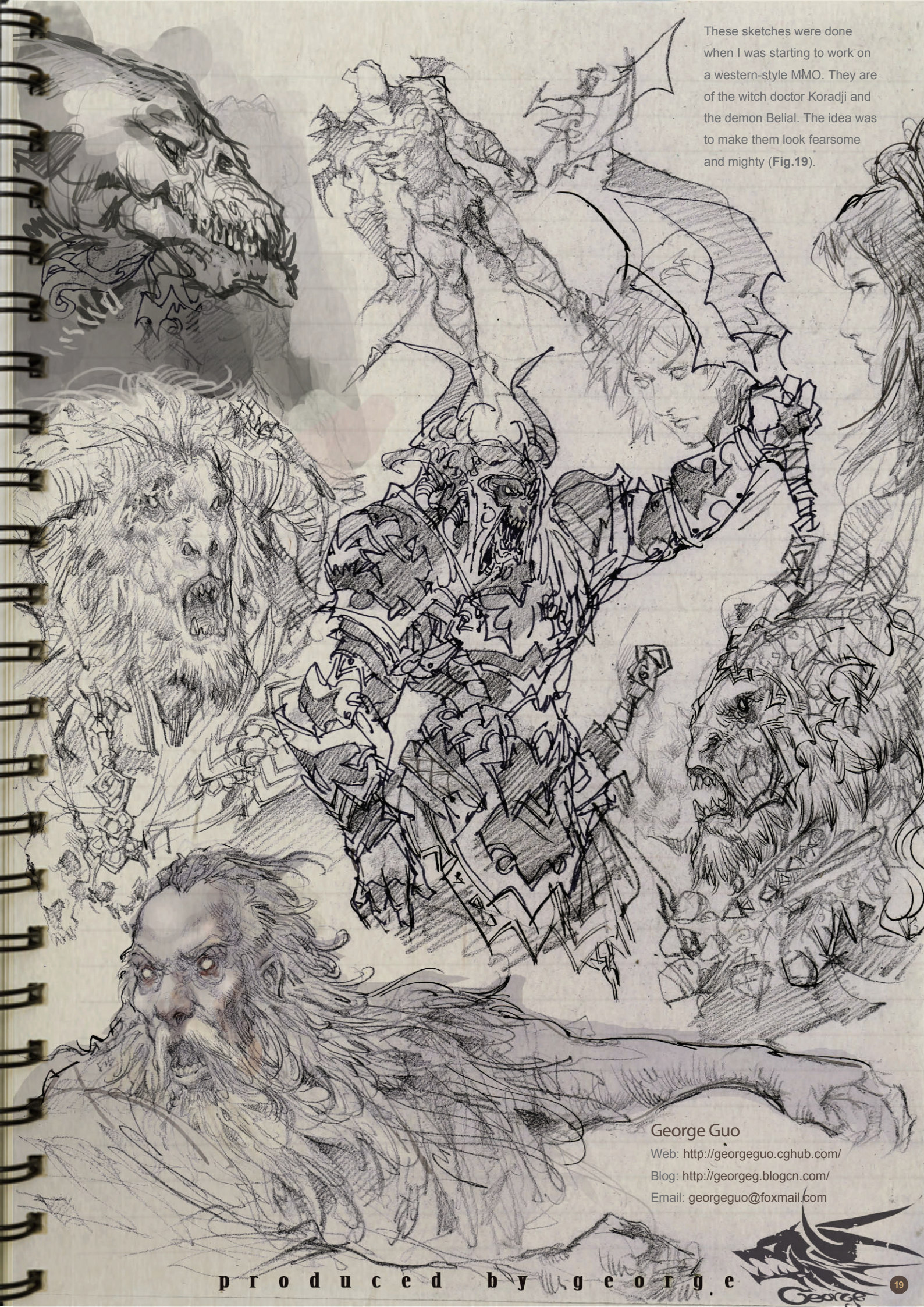
I am a big fan of nature and biology so I like to draw a lot of monsters and strange creatures. My wife is more of a fan of the cute creatures I draw (Fig.17).



Touts

Here are some more fantasy-like concepts heavily influenced by the armor and weaponry of the Middle Ages (Fig.18).





These sketches were done when I was starting to work on a western-style MMO. They are of the witch doctor Koradji and the demon Belial. The idea was to make them look fearsome and mighty (Fig.19).

George Guo

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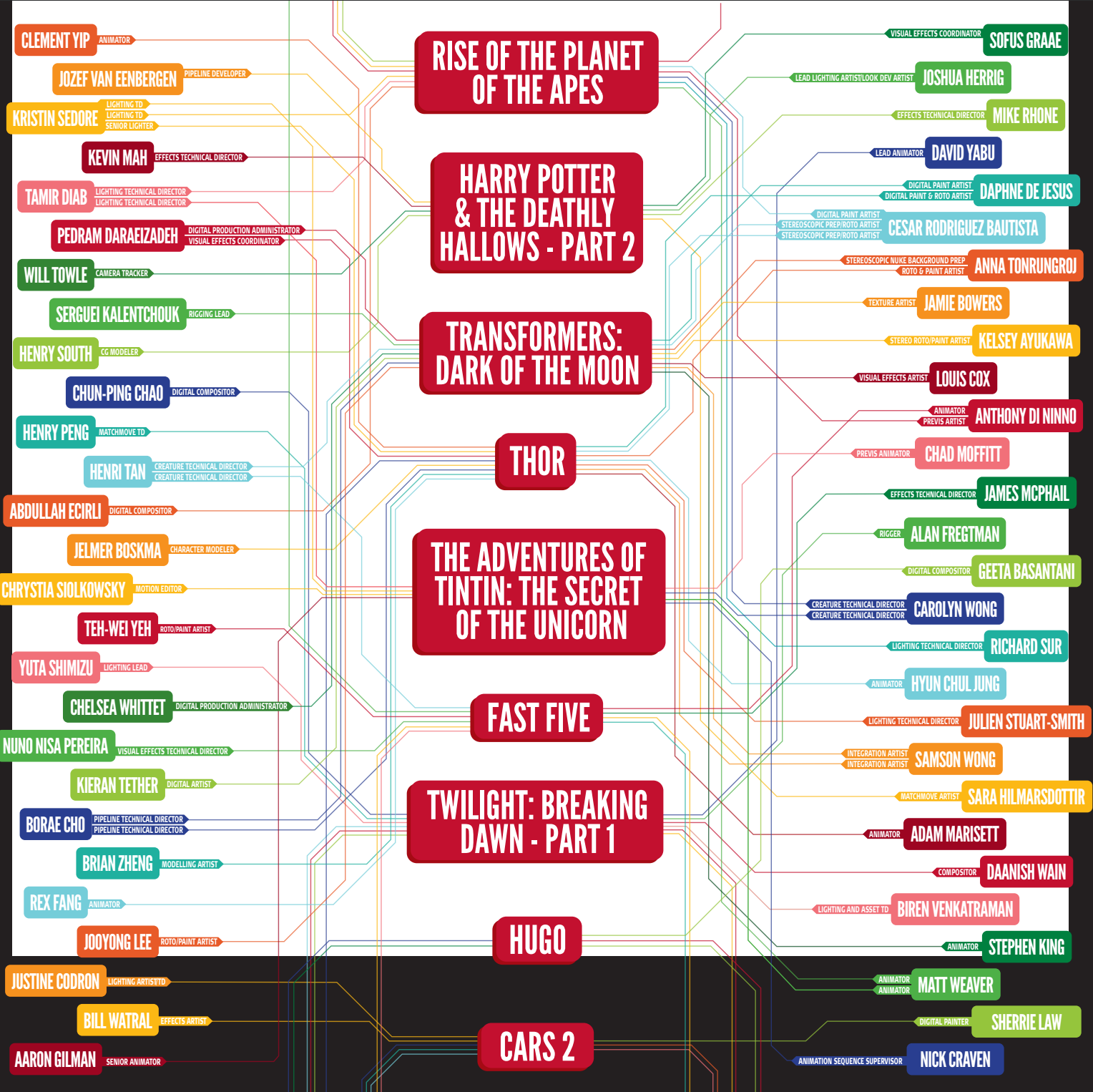
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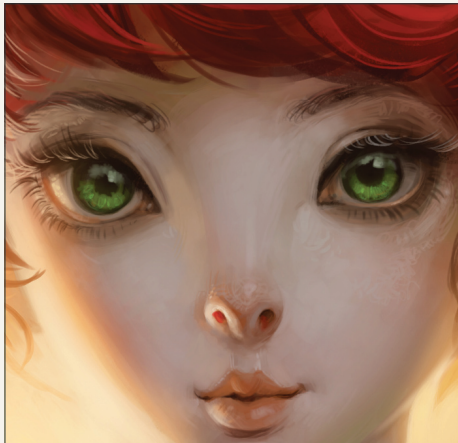


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GALLERY

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Alex Tooth | Chaichan Artwichai | Jordi Gonzalez | Michal Matczak | Oleg Leshiy Shekhovtsov | Yongjae Choi



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MAICZAK
2012

MANGA

HISTORICAL CHARACTERS



CHAPTER 02 - JOAN OF ARC

There are obviously many different styles of art that originate from different countries and cultures around the world. One of the most popular of these styles is what we know as manga. In this tutorial series we will be covering how to create our own manga characters using many of the recognizable features that we see in this style of art. Our tutor for this fantastic five-part series will be insanely talented artist **Patipat Asavasena**, who shows us at how to put his tips into practice whilst painting some super-cool manga historical characters.

Chapter 02 – Joan of Arc

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

In the previous article I told you about the overall workflow that I use to create an image and I also demonstrated a little bit of character design. This time I will look more specifically at the techniques used by character artists and how to draw something in a manga style. The character that I will be looking at in this tutorial is Joan of Arc.

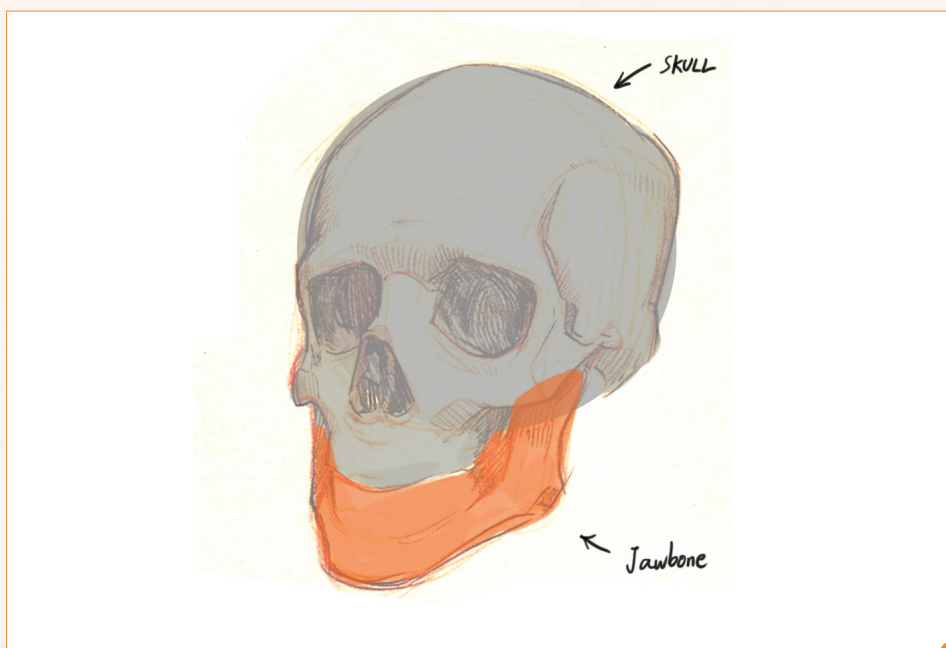
Before starting the actual image, I will introduce you to the technique I use to draw a character in a manga style.

Anatomy of a Human Skull

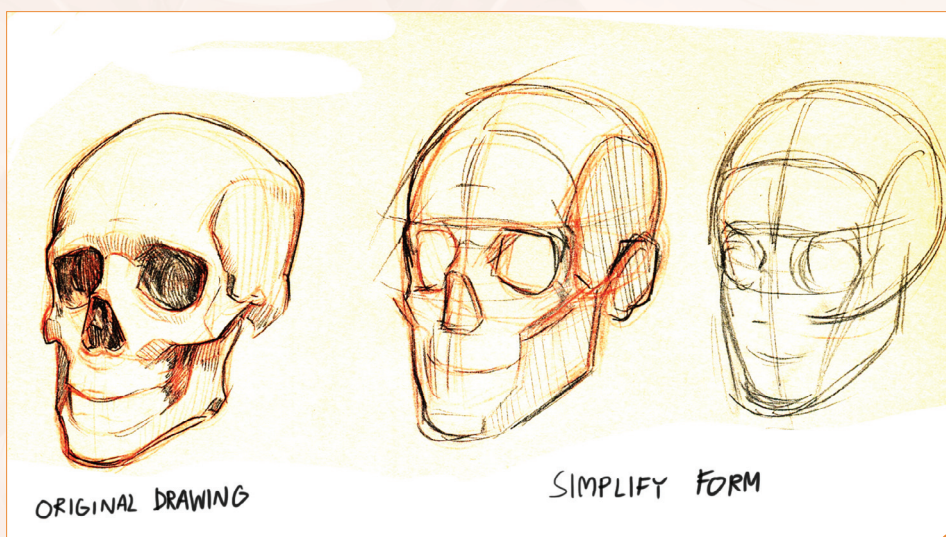
Anatomy is very important of course, so I begin by drawing an accurate human skull (**Fig.01**). It is really helpful if you can find a real skull or one that you can use as a reference when drawing. If you can't get one, you can always search for multiple references on the internet.

By studying the skull you will realize that it can be broken into two larger parts: the skull and the jaw bone. You can see in **Fig.02 – 03** how these larger shapes can be adjusted and simplified to create a manga-style head shape.

This whole process can be simplified further still to make our process more practical and



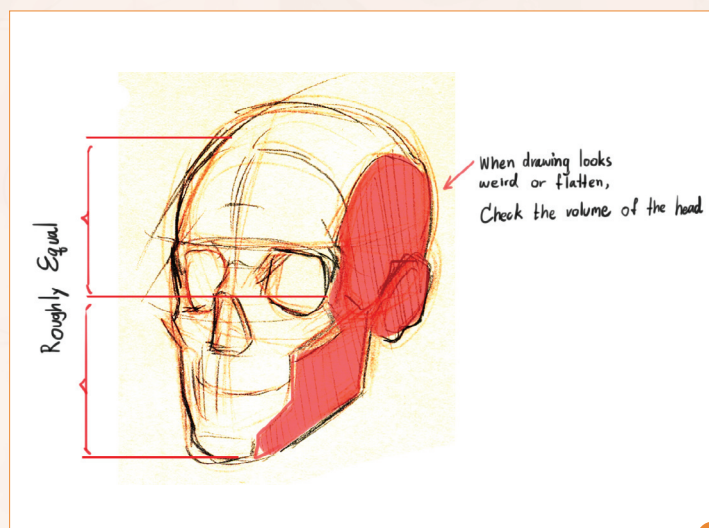
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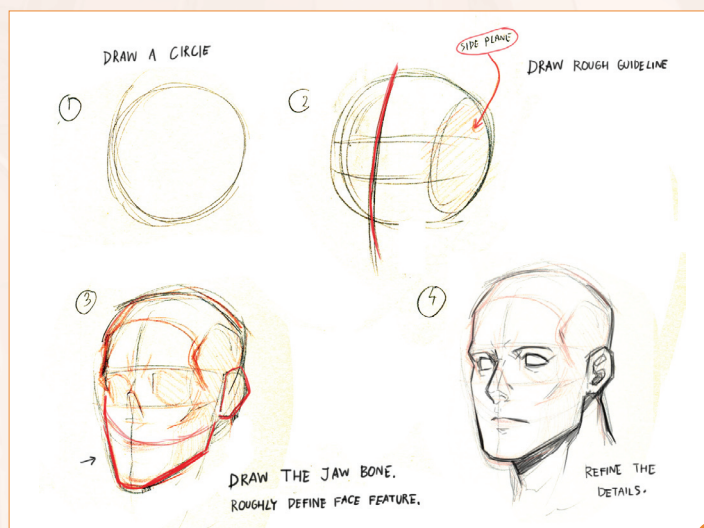
02

systematic. You can see how you can create the shape of a head using simple shapes in **Fig.04**.

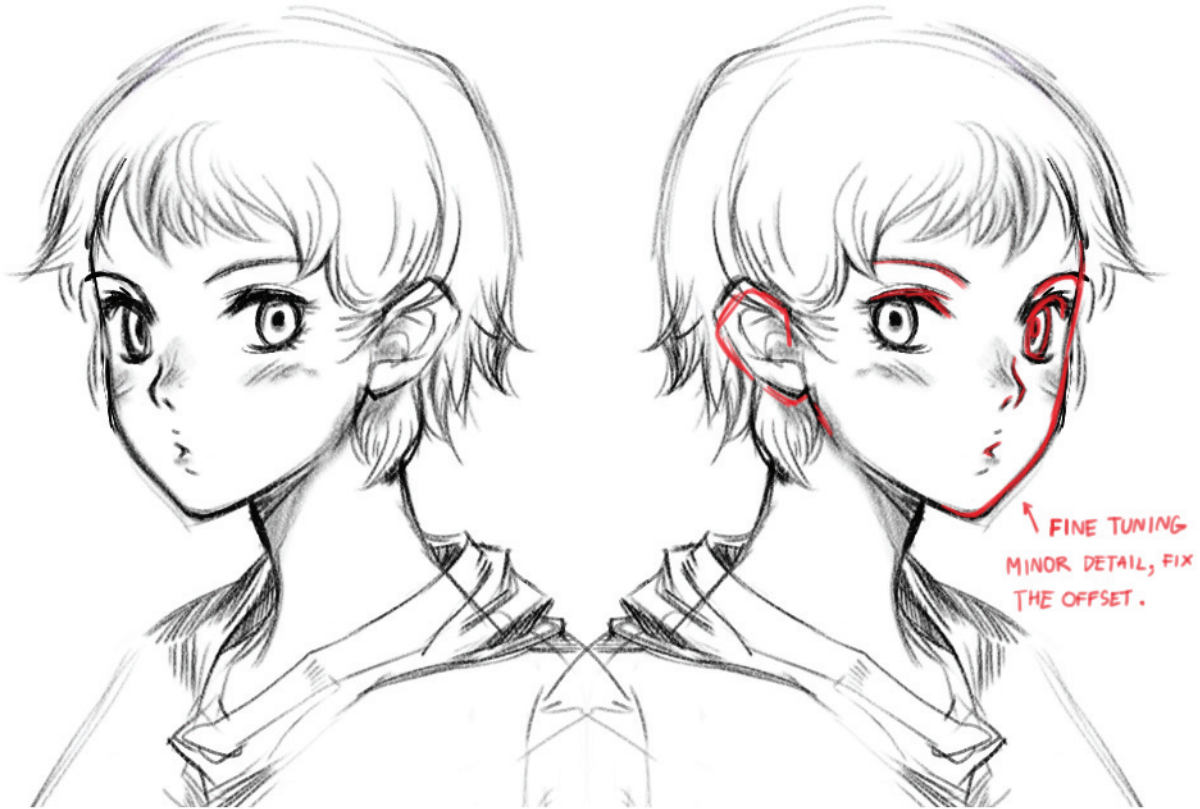
When you are drawing you should always think about volume unless the character is going to



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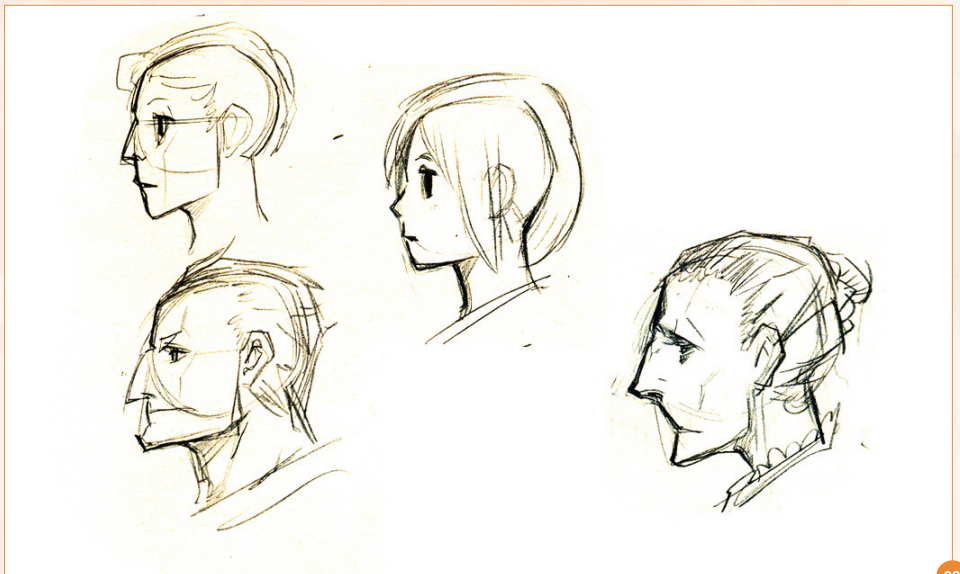
ORIGINALFLIP CHECK

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be colored or painted in a flat way. Check your character sketch to see if the forms look good by flipping the image horizontally. You may find that there is quite a big difference when you do this to the image and that you spot quite a few little errors. If you draw on paper you can flip your drawing by turning your paper over and holding it up against a window so you can see your line work through the paper. To flip the image in Photoshop use Image > Image Rotation > Flip Canvas Horizontal (**Fig.05**).

Vary the Character

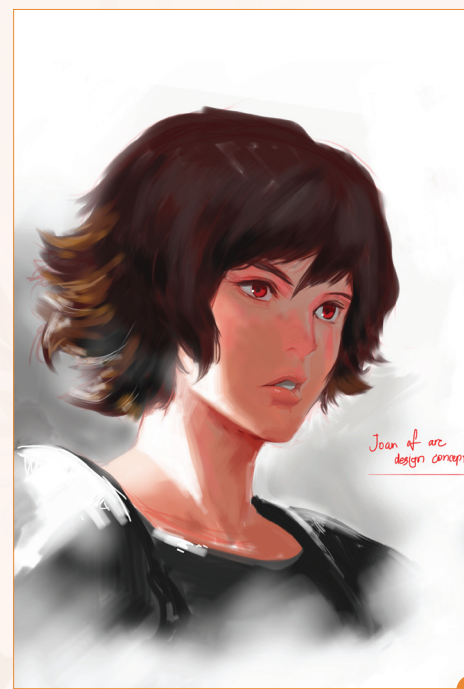
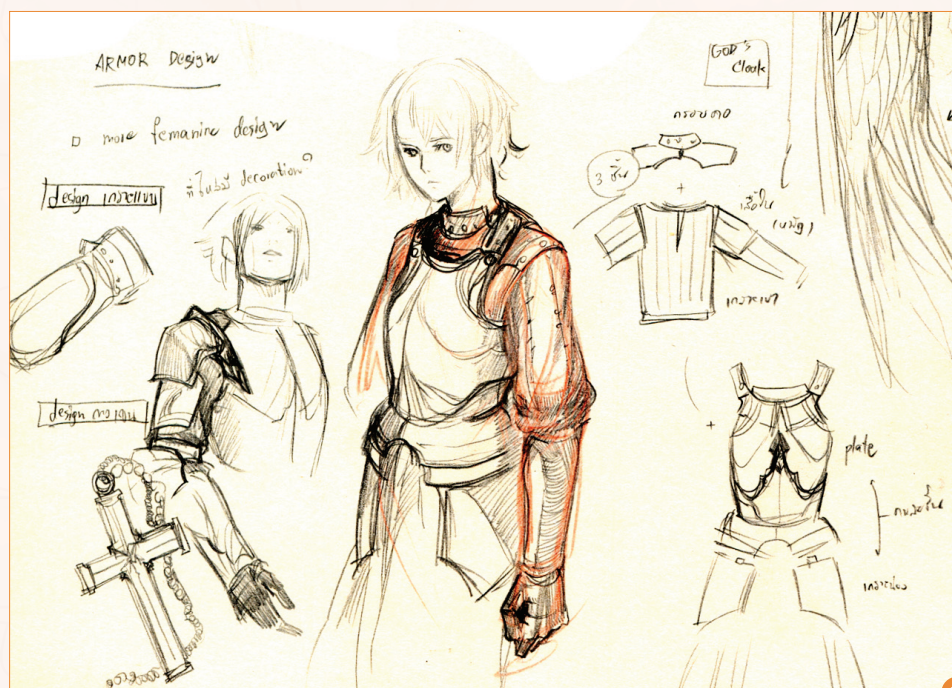
You can create multiple styles of faces using this technique by adjusting the shape of the jaw bone and other features, as you can see in **Fig.06**. You can find inspiration to help you do this by observing real people around you, or by drawing people in life drawing classes or anywhere else you can practice.



06

That's all the advice I can give you for drawing a face in a manga style. It sounds simple, but it takes a lot of time to become efficient at using this particular process. I recommend that you draw from life as often as you can

and study the human figure as it will really help you create a good character. Once you have a good understanding of how to draw anatomy you can apply it to a lot of different styles and techniques.



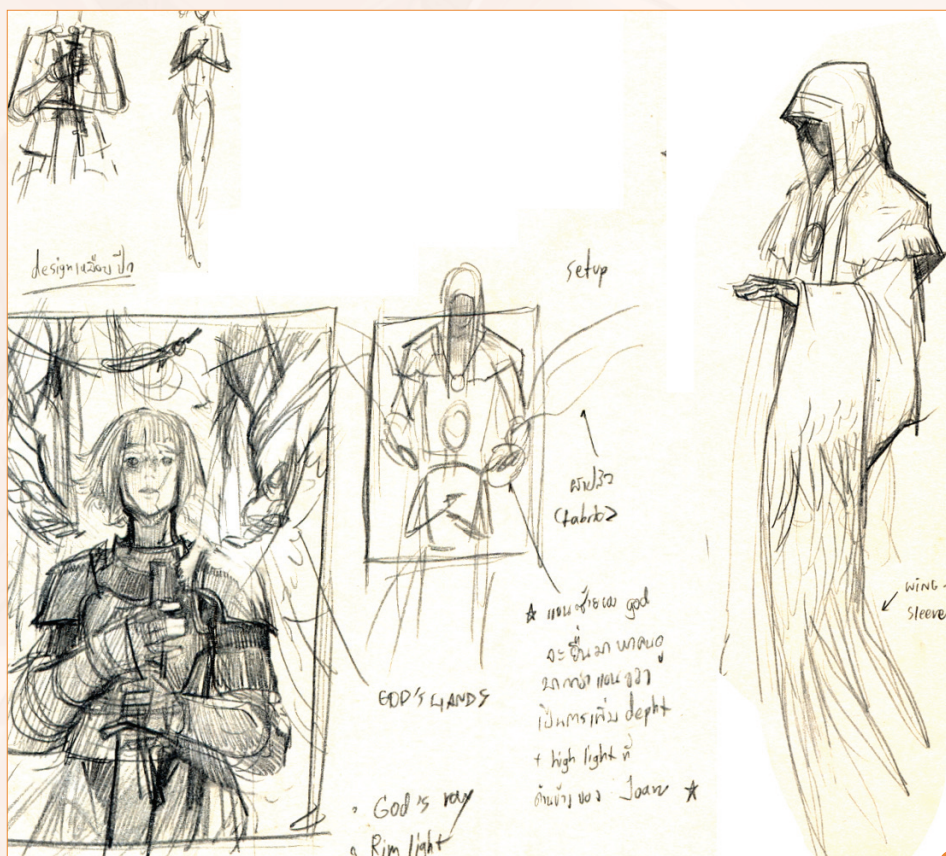
Start with a Concept

I always start every concept by gathering references and other information. When I have got an idea of what I would like to do I start designing the character by creating a set of thumbnail designs. It is useful to get extra information about your subject matter as it will help add story to your image. I found out that Joan of Arc was a French heroine who claimed that she was receiving direction from God in her role as a French military commander as she battled against the English. This made me think of keywords like a religious messenger or a holy knight (Fig.07 – 08).

Composition design

I chose a symmetrical composition to express the religious theme as this is common in that kind of art. To continue the religious theme I used common religious colors like red, gold and white. You often see these colors in the images that hang in churches and cathedrals. In the background I intended to show part of a glowing character, which was supposed to symbolize God leading the way (Fig.09).

In the case of this character I also got inspiration from Milla Jovovich who played Joan of Arc in the movie *The Messenger*.



Coloring Technique

I chose a different coloring technique to last time. This technique is similar to a watercolor technique. By adding layers of paint in Multiply mode I simply increased the tonal value of the desired areas. When I use this technique I don't create a layer mask, which means some color

will expand outside the edge of my sketch, but this doesn't have to be a bad thing. Little things like this will make an image look less digital and more like a traditional painting (Fig.10).

By swapping between a paintbrush and the Eraser tool you can achieve soft blending quite

quickly. This can be done using three simple steps (Fig.11 – 12):

- Create a new layer to paint on
- Apply the shade and color with a hard round brush
- Change to a soft eraser and delete the sharp edges as required.

Armor and Metallic Items

To create the armor, I used a technique where I use the Lasso tool and gradient fills to quickly create shading with soft blends on hard, mainly flat surfaces. This technique will leave you with a very clean-looking metal effect that will need to be painted over with a textured brush to make it look more believable. I also change the color hue from time to time when doing this as it provides some natural variation (Fig.13).

This technique can be explained in four simple steps:

- Lasso selects the desired area.
- Use the Gradient tool to fill the area using a mid-range opacity.
- Continue to the next area; you don't need to deselect
- Paint over the areas that should still be selected to add some texture.

God Light

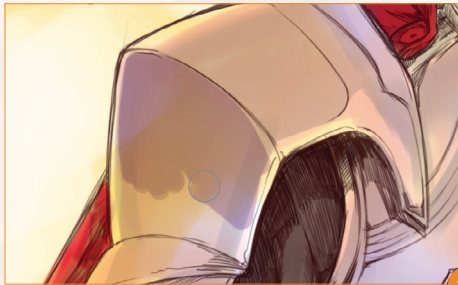
The God-like character was in the background and I didn't want him to compete with the main



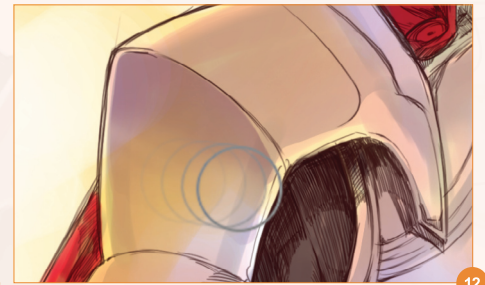
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character too much. I kept the overall tonal value gray, but also put some white area around the hands so it contrasts with Joan's face (Fig.14).

There are some details and a little bit of hue variation even in the white light. If I had painted it a pure white color then the picture would look very dull, so I used a complimentary color (light blue) combined with the light yellow and pure

white. By using this method my painting stayed rich looking and also felt naturally illuminated.

Minor Detail

After I had finished building up the shade with a Multiply layer, I flattened all the layers and painted on a new layer on the top using a normal round brush and some textured brushes. I then continued to add minor details and clean up messy areas until I was satisfied

with the overall image. I also did some minor adjustments using Curves and Color Balance.

Final Thoughts

That's it for Joan of Arc. It was fun to use so many techniques on one image, and I hope they prove to be helpful to you too (Fig.15).

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Vue image by Kazuya Hashimoto (winner of the 3D Environment Competition 2011)



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DREAMSCAPE



CREATING LIVE-ACTION ANIMATIONS. USING 2D PAINTINGS AND COMPOSITING TECHNIQUES

The *Dreamscape* animation is an amazing project led by regular 2DArtist magazine contributor, Jama Jurabaev. In this tutorial series Jama will be walking us through the processes that he and his team used to create this mind-blowing short. From concepts and storyboards through to live-action compositing, no rock is left unturned as Jama explains how you too can use some simple tricks and methods to create professional quality, live-action animations without needing a professional budget.

To see the *Dreamscape* animation in full, check out **Issue 075 of 2DArtist magazine which features Part 1 of this series.**



Live Footage

Software Used: 3ds Max and After Effects

Introduction

In the first two chapters I covered some tips about creating storyboards and concepts, and described the technique I used to create the matte paintings for the animation.

Once this was all done it was time to work on turning everything into an animation. I knew that to do this I was going to have to use a little 3D, and film some live action footage to add to the matte paintings and concepts. What I was hoping to end up with was a mixture of 3D, live action and matte paintings that looked seamless in my final animation.

Although the concept art and matte paintings were created by me, it would be an impossible

task to create this sort of short film without a huge amount of help, which is where my good friends came in. You will see a lot of them in the photos and in the video, and I am very grateful to every one of them.

Filming Live Action

These days it is possible to capture relatively good video footage using a DSLR camera.

There are a lot of really good and not too expensive cameras available on the market. With a little research you will easily find one that is suitable for your project and capable of everything you will need it to do. We used an EOS 5D Mark II camera, which is a really good camera and shoots full HD video footage.

The Green Backdrop

We also needed a green backdrop to be able to cut our main characters out and integrate

them into a CG environment. We handmade the green backdrop from materials that were easily accessible. We used the same backdrop for the whole process (**Fig.01**).

The key to using a green backdrop is to light it properly and uniformly so there is very little or no variation in its color. Although this is the key to using a green screen, in my personal experience even what looks like a perfect green backdrop will require some masking and manual cleaning.

Scenery

My aim was to create scenery that looked realistic and believable, especially on the foreground elements and things like dust, dirt and stones on the ground. We went out into the garden by our offices and collected everything we would need to create this effect from the





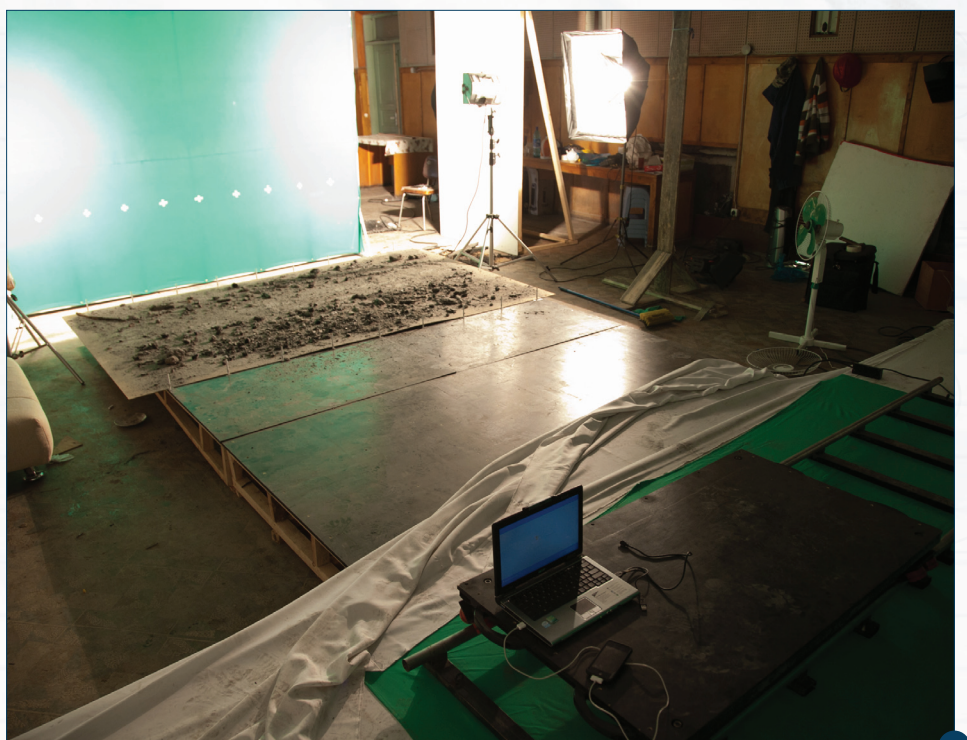
rubbish and anywhere else we could find anything useful (Fig.02 – 03).

The footage we recorded for the scene inside the shuttle was approached in a similar way, but this time we used props that would later be replaced with CG to mimic the instruments (Fig.04 – 05).

Effects

Creating realistic CG effects can be a tricky process, and to be honest we didn't have a specialist who could do it to help us with this project. Rather than trying to work out how to do it, we decided to film real-world effects.

To film the fire effects we burnt some wool and other items by covering them with fuel and lighting them with a lighter. This created an





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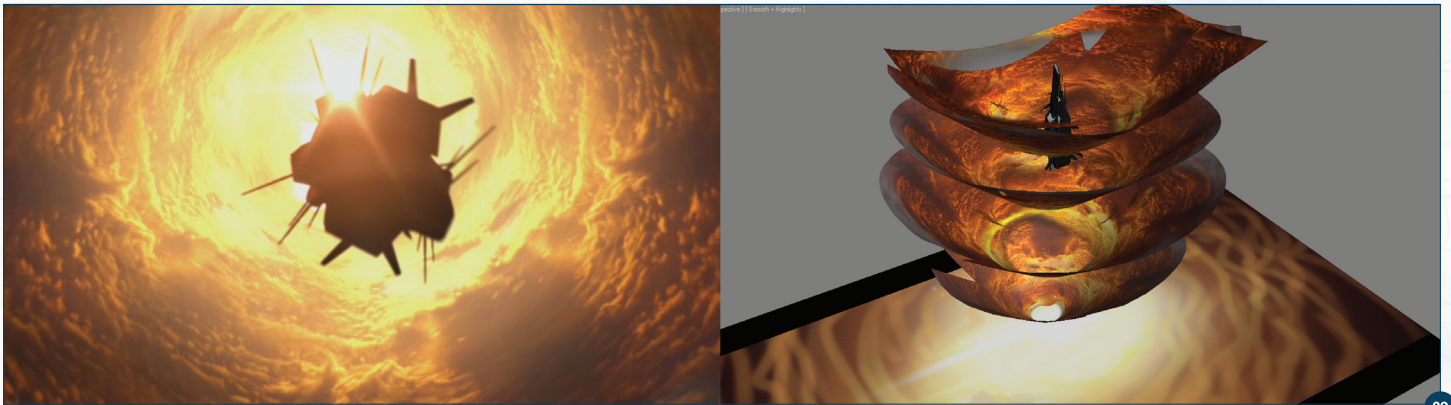
intense flame that was perfect to be used with our footage (**Fig.06**).

We were really lucky because whilst we were creating the animation it started to snow, which provided us with an opportunity to film some real snow to add to the video. Both of these real-world effects played an important part in the video and I will explain how we composited them in the final chapter of the series (**Fig.07**).

Unfortunately due to safety issues we could not shoot any big explosions. So we used stock videos (created by **Videocopilot.net**) for the big



07



explosions. To film the smoke effects we found a nearby factory that had really nice smoke coming from it.

Animation

Most of the shots were animated using a camera mapping or a camera projection method. The main principle of this method is to

project textures onto simple plates or geometry using a camera in 3D space. We used 3ds Max to do this as it was the software most familiar to us, but you can do it in any 3D software you like.

You can see some examples of some of the scenes that we used camera projection for in **Fig.08 – 10b**. If you look at these images and

then watch the video from the first tutorial in the series, you will see the different parts where the images have been projected and how they appear to overlap as the camera moves.

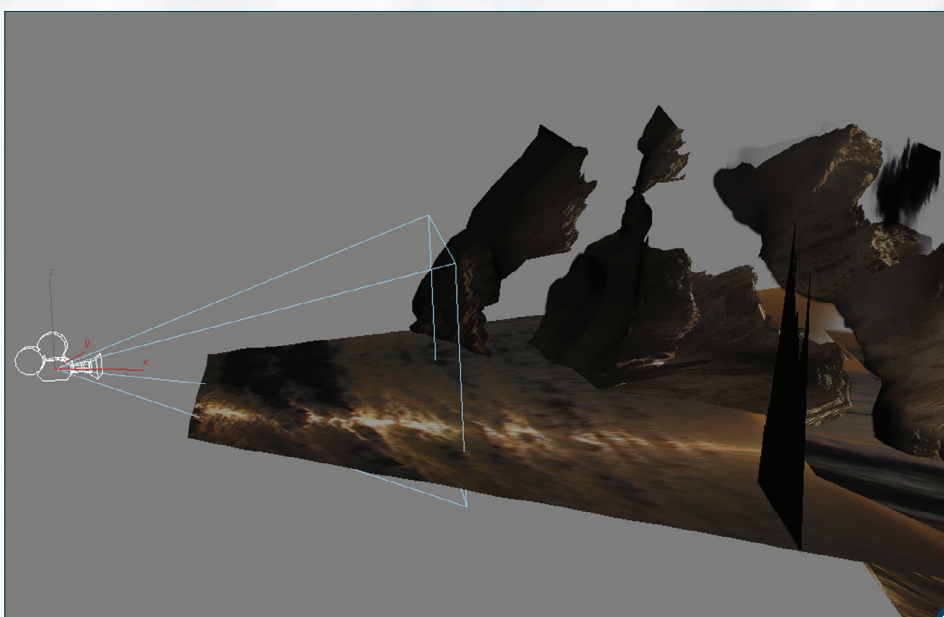
There is one problem with camera mapping though and that is that it can only really be used in areas where the movement by the camera is

limited and not too dramatic. We only had one shot where the camera turned 180 degrees, which caused a little trouble, but to deal with it I created a simple 3D model of the ship with simple textures that I could animate over a background.

We also created a lot of tiny animations in 2D using Adobe Effects, like storms on a planet. I will talk more about these in the next chapter though (Fig.11).

Conclusion

Once again I want to mention that this tutorial is not about the technical stuff; instead what I have shared with you are practical tips that can help you to create something yourself, from your own imagination. Before I created my video I had a dream, and it was that dream that encouraged me to make the video.



10b

Once again I want to say thanks to the friends that helped me with this project. In the next chapter I will be talking about the way we composited the video and CG footage.

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11

DESIGNING DROIDS



Digital art has its place in many industries, but none of these rely on it as much as the games industry! Obviously games are made of many elements, but you could argue that the most important element of any game is the characters. In this tutorial series our artists will be showing us how to design droids as if they were doing it within the games industry. This will involve them coming up with the design and showing you how to develop it to the point where they will even show you how to create the technical drawings for a 3D modeler!

BARTENDER DROID

Chapter 4: Bartender Droid

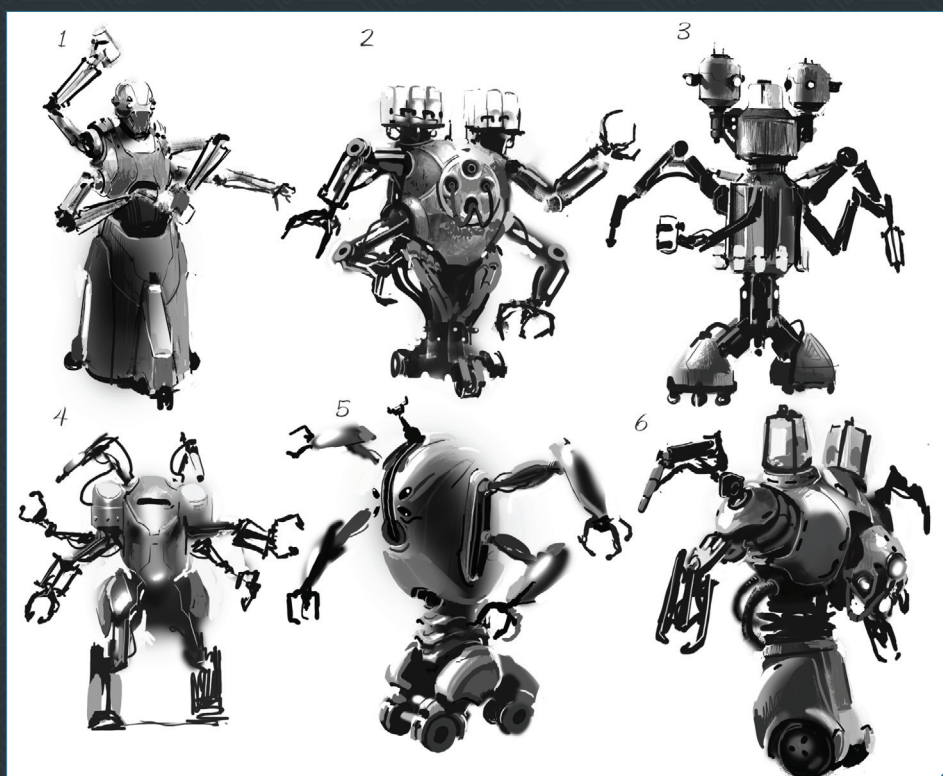
Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

This image was a great challenge to think about. When I got asked by the editor of 2DArtist magazine to do it, my first thought was to draw something simple, perhaps, with my focus being the design. But finally, as I nearly always do, I ended up making things much more complicated so that my work has an added value. I believe that in order to produce a more desirable idea, it is necessary to be a perfectionist.

The Idea

I really like to wander here and there at night with my friends, along the streets of Buenos Aires, stopping for a while at any one of the numerous bars or pubs that open throughout the night. I like to enjoy a beer or a drink whilst watching a football match on the TV, or just talk a mixture of nonsense and seriousness while getting acquainted with people who enjoy the never-ending journey like I do. From Mondays to Saturdays this cosmopolitan city offers a wide variety of places where Argentine people or



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visitors from abroad can choose how and where to have fun.

So while looking for inspiration and references, I visited several places that were decorated in a modern or classical style, and also some British

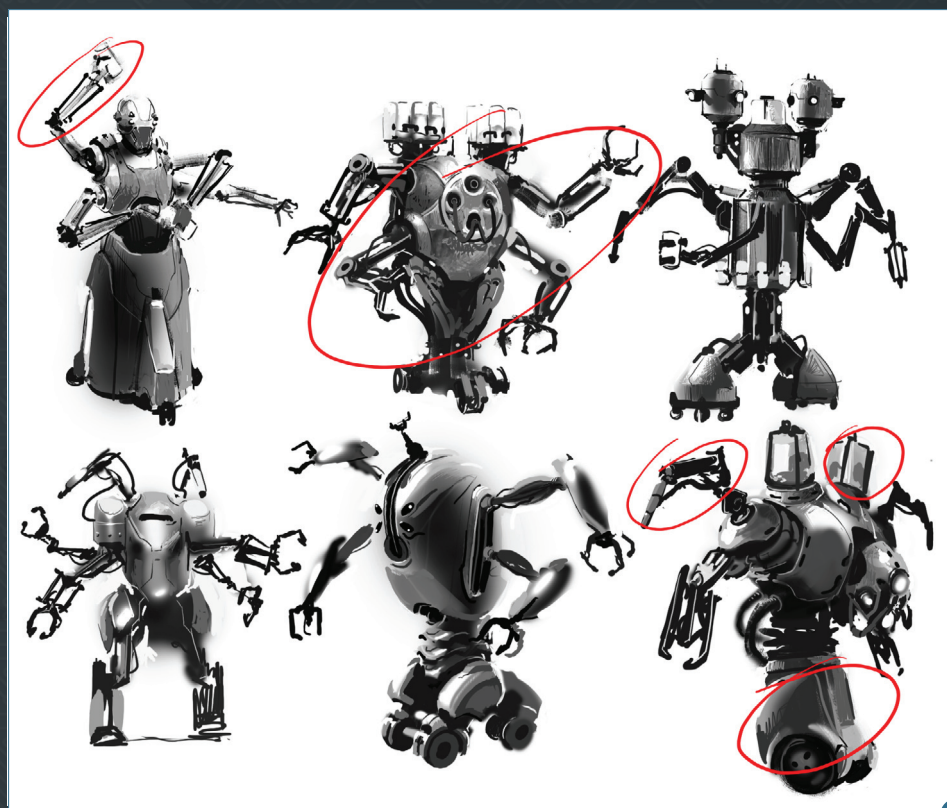
or Irish pubs where foreigners usually meet, together with artists and lovers of beer and good football.

The first thing I did was to draw several thumbnails and sketches so that I had options available by the time I needed to start the final design. I always say that the best thing to do is draw anything that comes into your mind, without any limitations. This is the way you have to work in the film and video game industries; thumbnails and sketches are what you have to get done first (Fig.01).

When choosing a single design among several concepts, the best thing to do is meet with the art director, lead artist and lead designer to select the parts you all like from each design. You can then put these parts together and link them in a final concept (Fig.02).

The Design

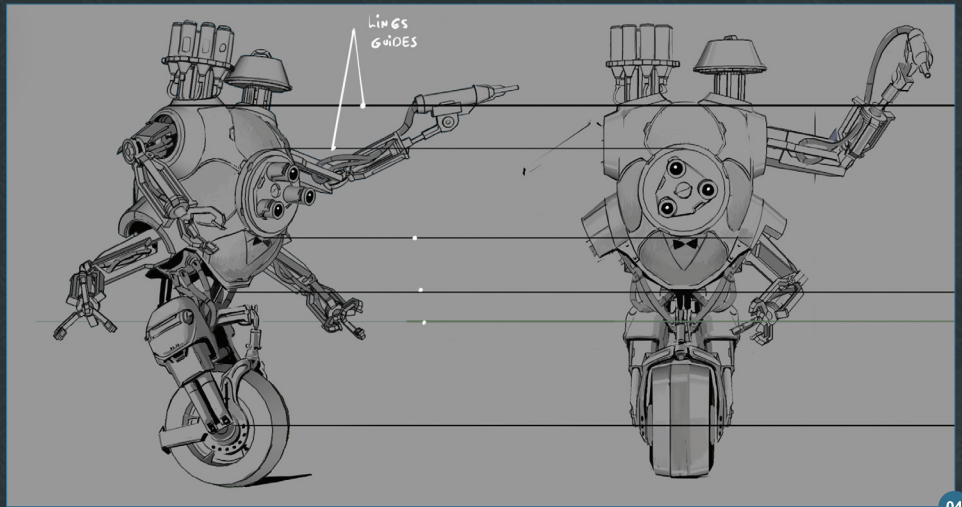
The nightlife made me think that the best way to show a robot bartender was in its work environment. I chose a retro 80's style, with a lot of influence from *Star Wars*, which is one of my favorite movies for its designs.



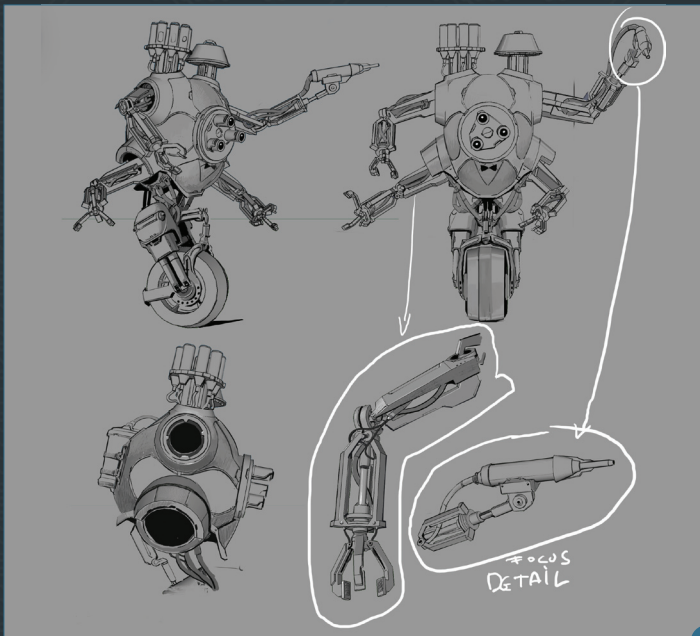
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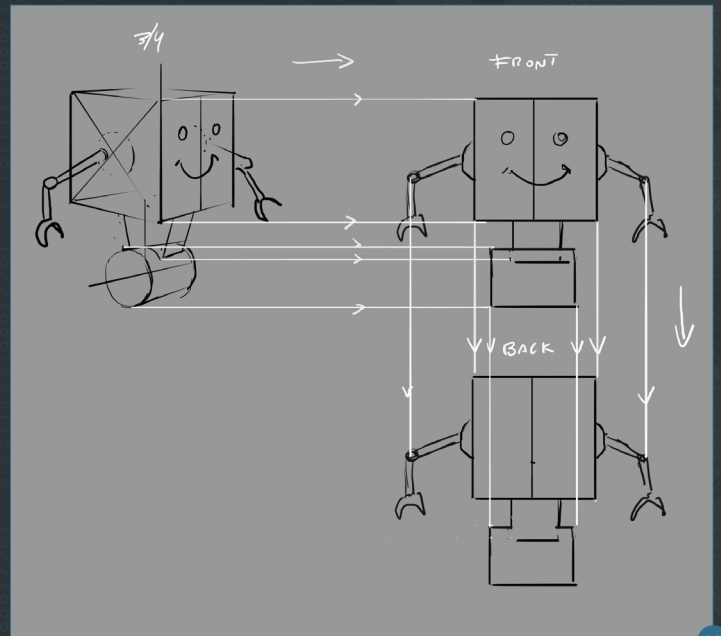
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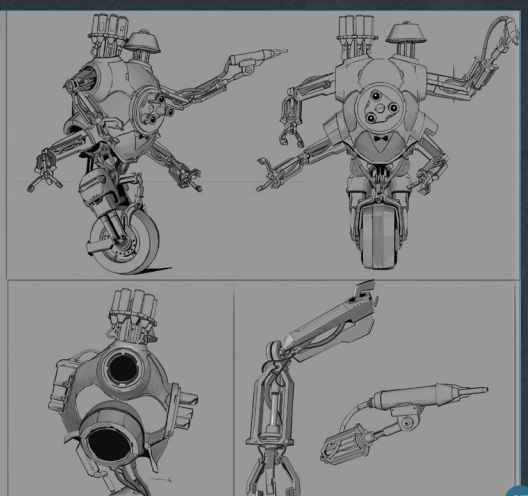
In the production of professional work, we have to show a schematic of our designs. This technical guide is useful for 3D artists when modeling the character (Fig.03).

The easiest way to make a schematic is based on the $\frac{3}{4}$ view, which means we can project the guidelines in order to step to the next view. It's like moving the plan of a house to be able to see all the sides of it (Fig.04).

The most important views are the $\frac{3}{4}$ view of the front and back. If we want, we can add the profile view and detailed plans of the areas that perform some specific functions. The more information we give to 3D artists, the more accurate the final model will be (Fig.05).

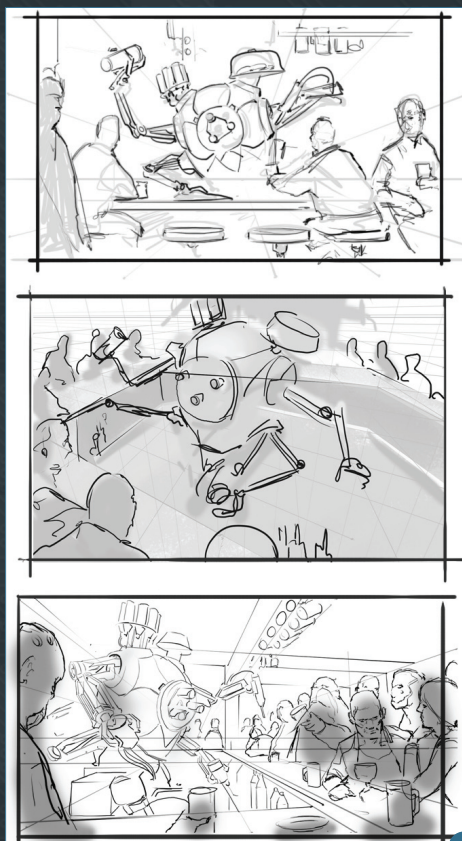


To understand how to make a schematic better, I made an example with simple geometric shapes (Fig.06).



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To obtain a perfectly presented idea, we can add the color design along with the schematic; this is a more professional and aesthetic way to introduce our designs (Fig.07).



08

The Illustration

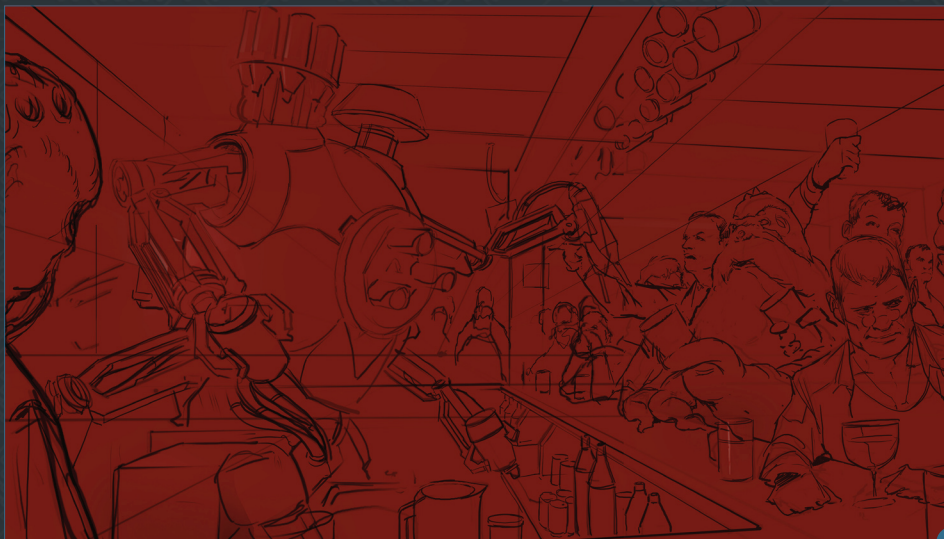
Previously I said that the first stage was the concept, the second stage was the final approved design and the last stage was marketing materials or the finished artwork. Almost all video game studios work this way. The final illustration will show the method of creating this style and how the design is applicable for all other project designs.

To begin the illustration I made a couple of sketches. This was to see which the best option was to see how a bartender works. In **Fig.08** are some examples of this.

I found the first sketch very symmetrical and front on, without much action. The second option seemed perhaps a bit more dynamic, but I still did not like it. What I needed was a scene where I could feel part of the situation, as if I were stuck in the scene. So I went with the last option. I really like pictures that have photographic effects like films do, or make me feel as if I were interacting within the scene. I think they are a lot funnier and impressive.



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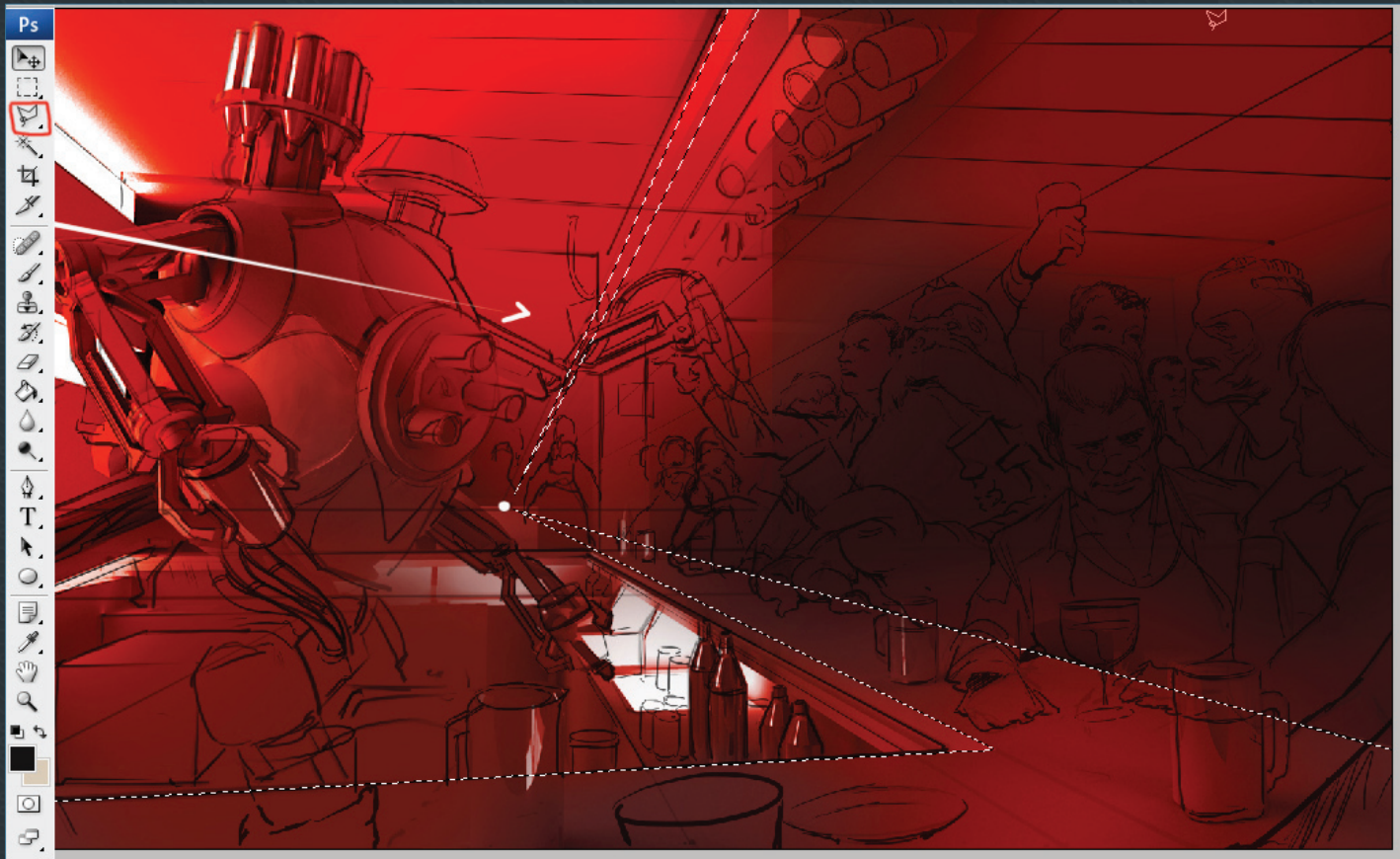
Once I knew which scene I was using, I began to add detail to the sketch on a new layer; I enlarged the image and began to polish it completely (**Fig.09**).

The next step was to set the background color; this is the base to add colors to each element of the drawing. Red will lead all the other colors (**Fig.10**).

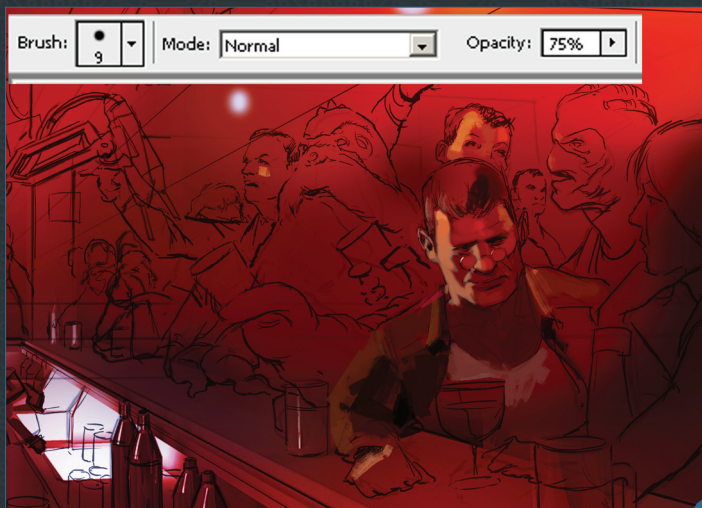
When the drawing is very complex I usually define volumes in black and white or in this case, using the base color. I found that drawing the robot was very difficult. That is why I detailed volumes in a single color first, so that afterwards it would be easier for me to add the final details (**Fig.11**).



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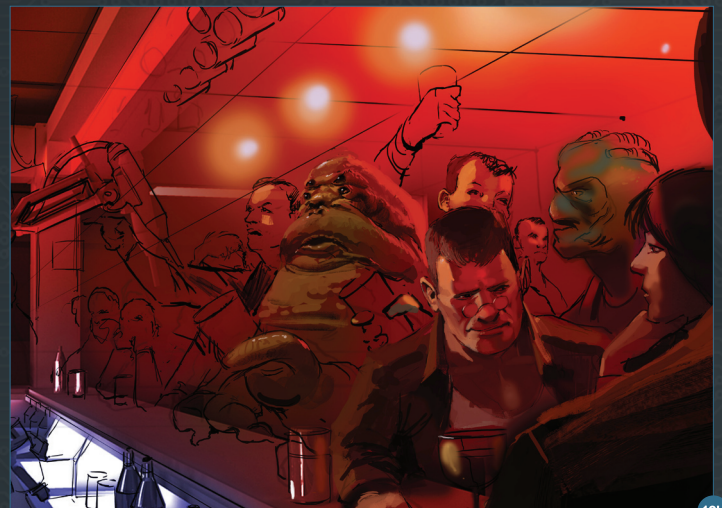


13a

To accurately define geometric objects, in this case the bar and walls, I used the Polygonal Lasso tool towards the vanishing point. I painted with a mask to create a well-defined and neat edge. Using the vanishing point as a guide helped give a perfect finish to all surfaces and flat edges (Fig.12).

Color

Once I had defined the basic plans of the drawing I started with color, creating a new



13b

layer in Normal mode. From there I started painting, using a brush at 70 to 100% opacity (Fig.13a – b).

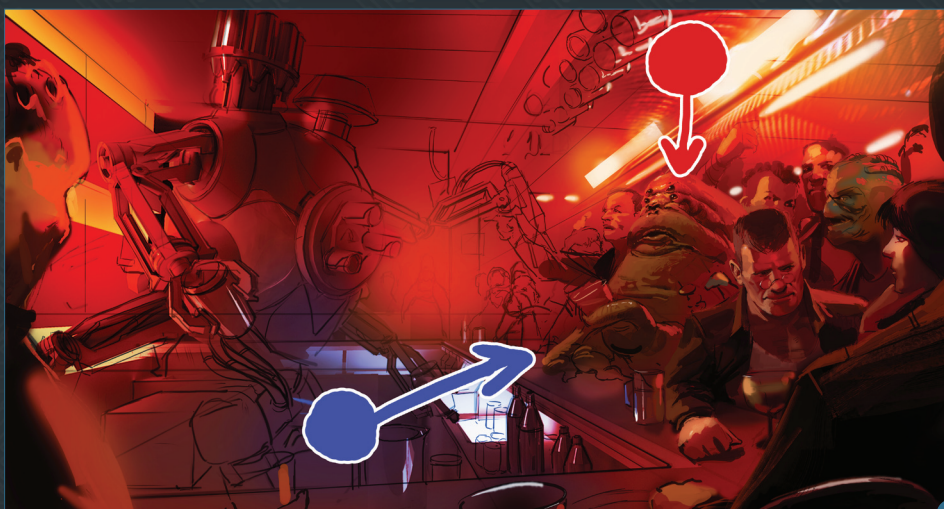
For painting I am guided by the lights in my picture. In this case, there was an orange light on the top right and a blue light coming from the bar at the bottom left. The blue light effected the robot's base, since it came from below and, at the same time, touched the top of the face and hands of people leaning on the bar (Fig.14).

As I always say in my tutorials: paint the light to show the shape of the individual elements in the scene (Fig.15).

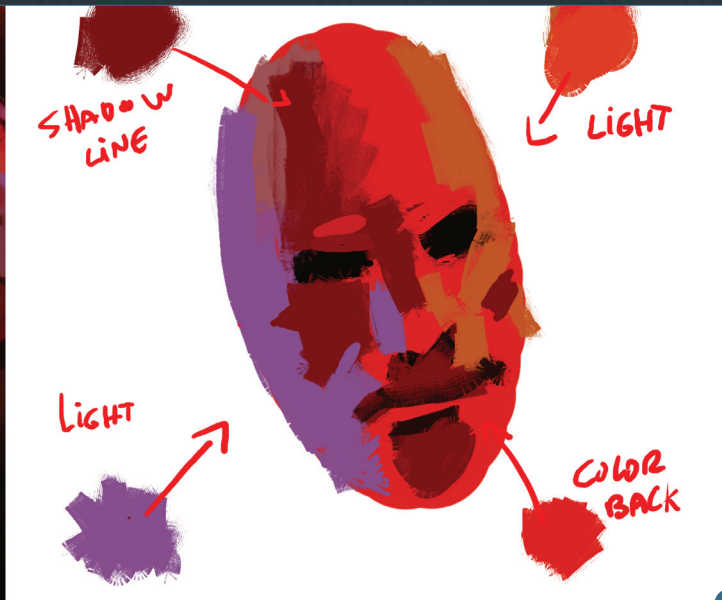
To help achieve a photographic effect while giving depth to the picture, we can place objects that are further back and out of focus. This creates an illusion of being inside the action; as if we, the viewer, are the ones taking the photo (Fig.16).

Conclusion

To work professionally, you don't need to be an expert in digital art. As you can see, almost everything I have explained can be done with the Brush tool, masks and a few layers. The important thing is to have a good foundation of traditional drawing and a lot of patience. To create this picture it took me two weeks to think about the idea before I was prepared to draw it. Always keep in mind the way in which you will present the image. Making sure it's different from others will give you the opportunity to do great things.



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Ignacio Bazan Lazcano

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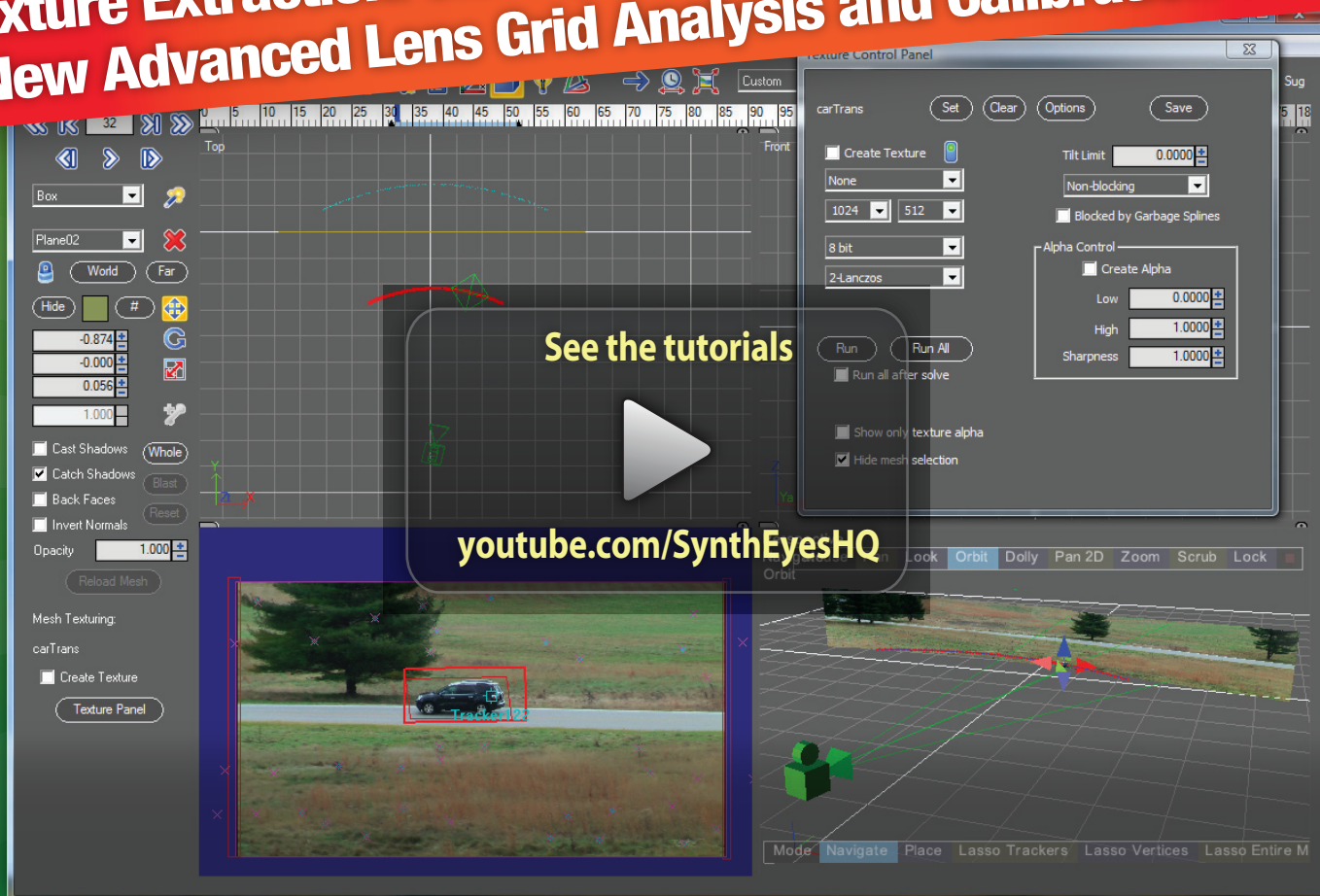
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PAINTING CREATURES FROM MYTHOLOGY



Myths, legends and fantasy creatures have always been influential when it comes to digital art. In fact, many artists will never really stray too far from these sorts of themes and ideas. In this series a selection of stunning artists will be taking this popular subject and exploring some of its more diverse and lesser known characters. Throughout the series each artist will be given a brief for a character which they will need to interpret and turn into an illustration. To make things a little more interesting this will be done by not one but two artists, one using Photoshop and the other using Painter. This will not only show some of the differences between the two pieces of software, but will also show how the same brief can be interpreted in two different ways. This month **Christopher Peters** and **Simon Dominic Brewer** tackle the **Jiang Shi**.



Chapter 5: Jiang Shi

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

Hello guys! My name is Christopher Peters and this is my first time doing this, so I hope you like my simple tutorial!

I had never heard of the Chinese creature the Jiang Shi before and I only had the brief as reference, which stated it was a vampire-zombie-like monster. Also I could not do any further research as this would perhaps influence my own ideas. So to paint this image I used my imagination and iconic Chinese designs as my only references.

My goal was to avoid making the beautifully bright vampires you find in teen films and make a horrible zombie/vampire instead. I also wanted to emphasize the narrative in the image.

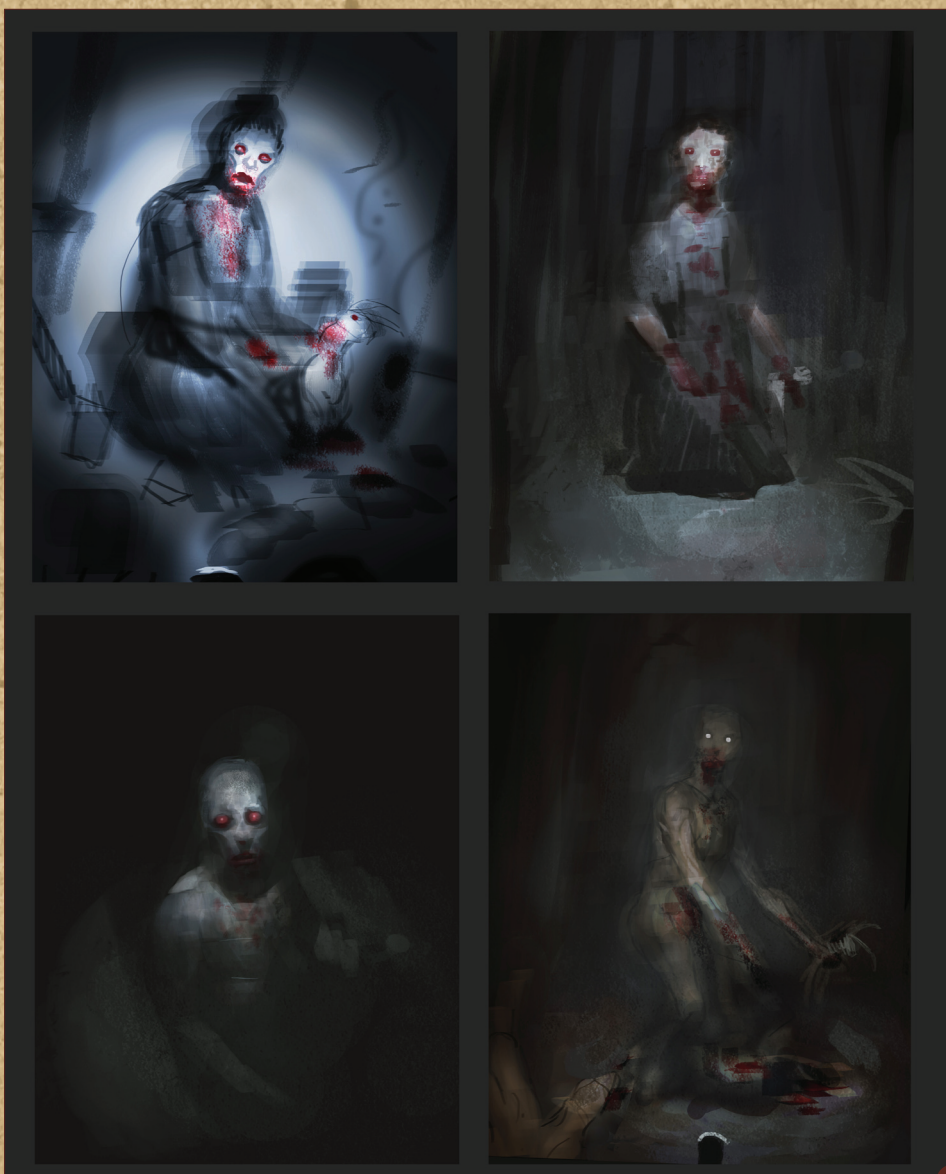
I wanted to create an image from the first person viewpoint, kind of like what we often see in horror movies or in horror-based computer games. What would you do if you were in a dark place with your flashlight looking for something and suddenly you rotate and point it a horrible creature mutilating a cute, white bunny? I thought this idea sounded interesting so this is what I based my image on.

Sketches, Ideas and More...

I started off by deciding that a focused light source would create a darker and more dramatic tone to my illustration.

As I mentioned, this is a Chinese vampire, and according to Chinese horoscopes it is the year of the rabbit right now, so I felt it would be good to paint my vampire killing a sweet, white bunny.

With all these crazy concepts in mind I drew some sketches to get a general idea about the composition, lighting, narrative, etc., of the image (Fig.01).





Lighting

Before I started the illustration I had to choose and study my lighting. The spot light was an important part of this concept, but it raised a big problem for me as I don't often use this type of lighting in my paintings. So for this reason I took photographs to be used as references (**Fig.02**).

I used a normal bulb and a magazine to channel the light to get a pipe effect. This study helped me to understand how the light is dispersed (**Fig.03**).

Sketch Election

I considered all of my composition sketches carefully and I decided to choose the simplest image. Starting from this sketch I began my final illustration (**Fig.04**).

Color Palette, Brushes, Study.

I chose a desaturated palette consisting of grays and pale colors, in contrast to a lot of red saturated blood tones (I love desaturated tones!).

I didn't plan to use anything special as far as the brushes were concerned; I just used a selection of my own brushes with lots of textural variety. I created a color chart to show a personal study of how the colors work in my chosen





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color palettes and to take reference from when working on my illustration (Fig.05).

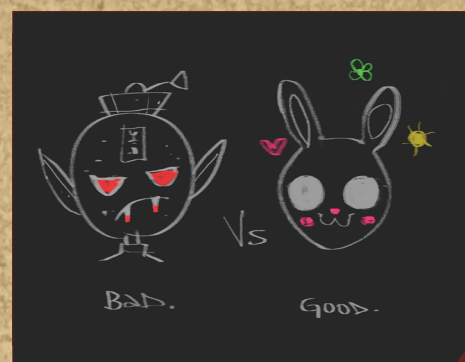
The Contrast!

Contrast should never be underestimated in art. As I have already said there will be a contrast between the saturated and desaturated colors, but to make things interesting you should also consider the characters involved and how you portray their nature. For example, the evil-

looking vampire is holding a little bunny, which exaggerates how evil the character is (Fig.06).

Unpredictable Things: The Head

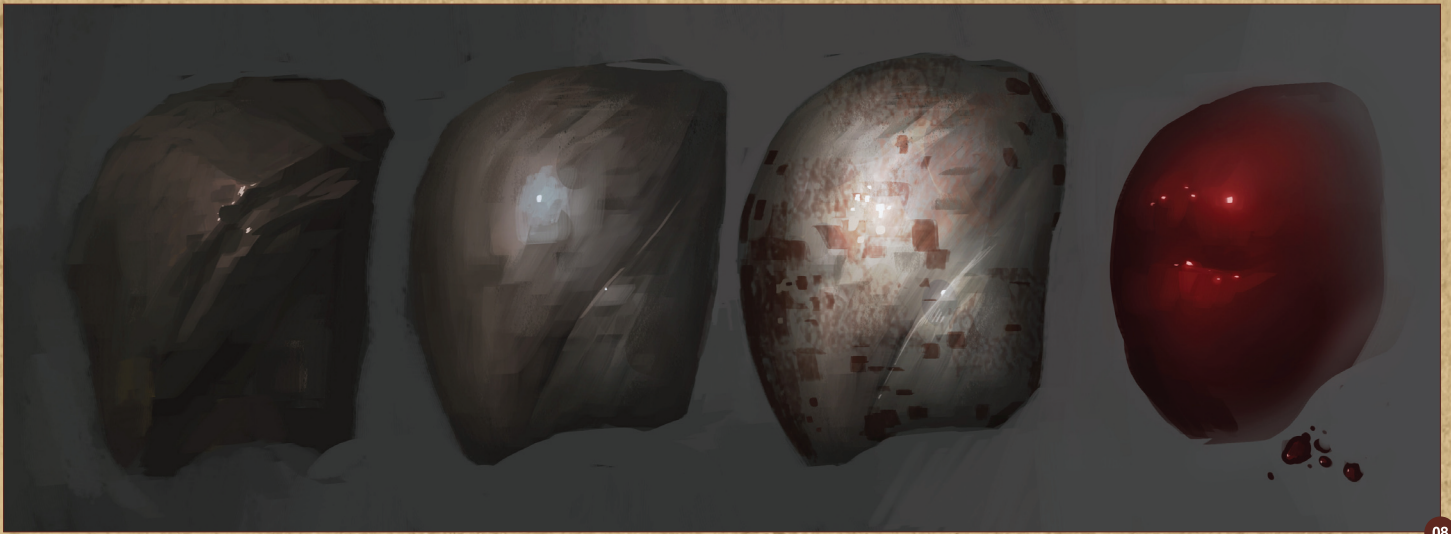
The best parts of producing an illustration are the unpredictable tasks you face along the way. I once told a friend, "You do not know what you'll do until you do it." That's a good way to describe what happened to the head of this vampire. As you can see in Fig.07, this guy suffered a lot



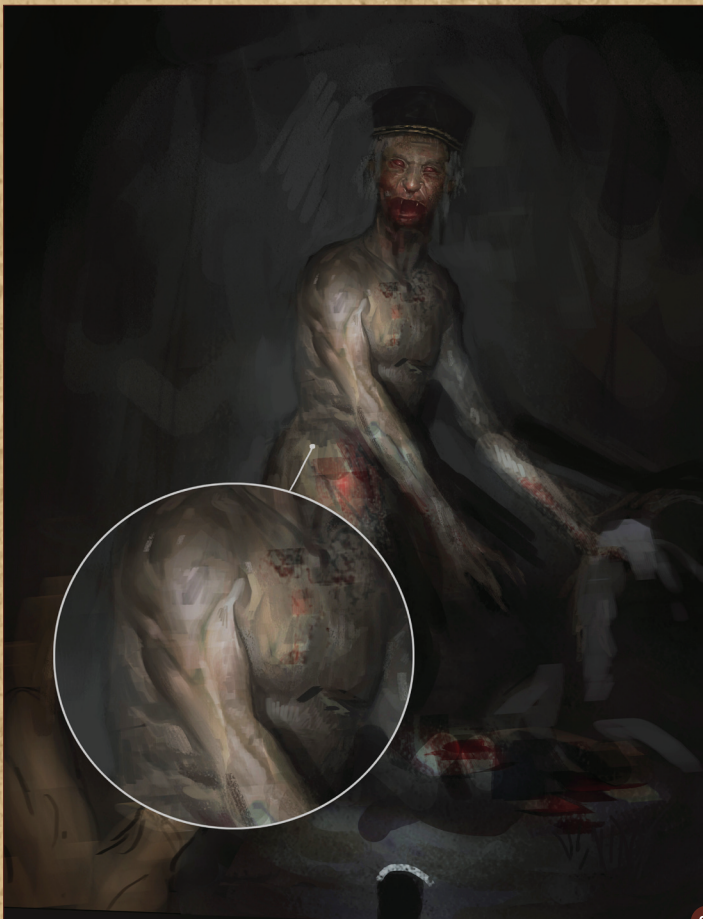
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of mood changes, from happiness through to depression, until I achieved an aggressive look.

Volume, Material and Texture

I wanted to paint a horrible body with broken, yellowish skin, flabby muscles and a dead look. To achieve this effect I needed a lot of texture, gray tones and some crazy volumes. I created a material test to compare the best results for the look I was going for (Fig.08).

The application of these materials in this case was very simple. I painted from dark to light, adding the middle tones as the image progressed. I slowly built the image up stroke by stroke to create volume, choosing multiple tones along the way (Fig.09).

Lantern Spotlight

To emulate the torch light effect, I took a good look at the reference photos I'd taken and simply



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made a circular selection. I filled this selection with a flat color and set it in Overlay mode. When I had done that I painted over it to define some of the little details. I had a lot of fun doing this (Fig.10).

Hands

For the hands of the person holding the flashlight I used my own hands as a reference (Fig.11). I used this reference and painted in the



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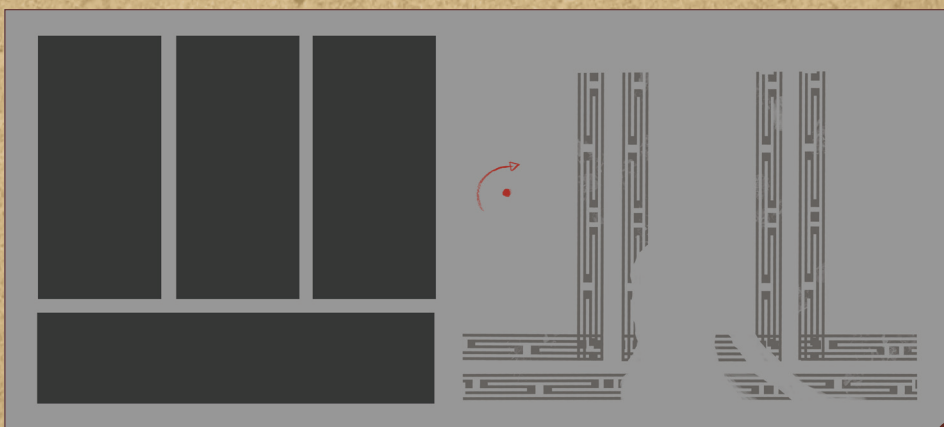


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hands using the same technique as I mentioned earlier, working from dark to light. I also had to add some atmospheric effects in front of the torch to give it a realistic appearance (Fig.12 – 13).

Background

For the background I created some patterns based on Chinese architecture (Fig.14). I placed these patterns in Overlay mode over the background using references to make it look authentic and believable. I rotated these



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patterns according to the referenced geometry to put them in their appropriate places (Fig.15).

The Rabbit

For the white rabbit I found references of dead, hunted, dismembered, disemboweled, beheaded, mutilated, shot, tortured, and flayed rabbits. Strangely people quite like taking pictures of this stuff.

At this stage I used some photo textures, like hair, blood, bones and other details. I have displayed the brushes and colors I used along with the progress of painting the rabbit in Fig.16.

Adjustments

I then went on to adjust the colors of the image using adjustment layers like Color Balance, Levels, etc. I tuned up the small details with

small brushes and finally added some extra details like the Chinese hat, Chinese posters, blood, blood, blood and more blood (Fig.17).

Christopher Peters

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Chapter 5: Jiang Shi

Software Used: Painter

Introduction

A Jiang Shi is a type of vampire zombie from Chinese folklore. According to legend, the Jiang Shi rests in a coffin during the day, or hides in a cave, and then comes out at night to terrorize the local community and seek all types of warm-blooded prey. When it catches its quarry it absorbs their life essence, or Qi. In typical zombie fashion it holds its arms outstretched when it's hunting although it's also rumored to hop everywhere, which is not typical zombie – or vampire – behavior.

Defining the Artists' Oils Brush

I use two basic brushes for most of my paintings. The most important one to me is the Artists Oils brush, which I use in combination

with paper grain to produce an authentic oil painting effect. The most important thing is to link the opacity with an Expression setting of Pressure. I set the value of opacity to 100%. For the grain I use a mid-range value as this maximizes grain appearance with Artists' Oils (for some reason the effect decreases again as you increase from 50 to 100%).

For the Artists' Oils specific settings I set the amount to 100% and have high Viscosity and low Blend. Bristling and Clumpiness I set fairly high and Trail-off very low at 4%. I work with the Wetness at 100%.

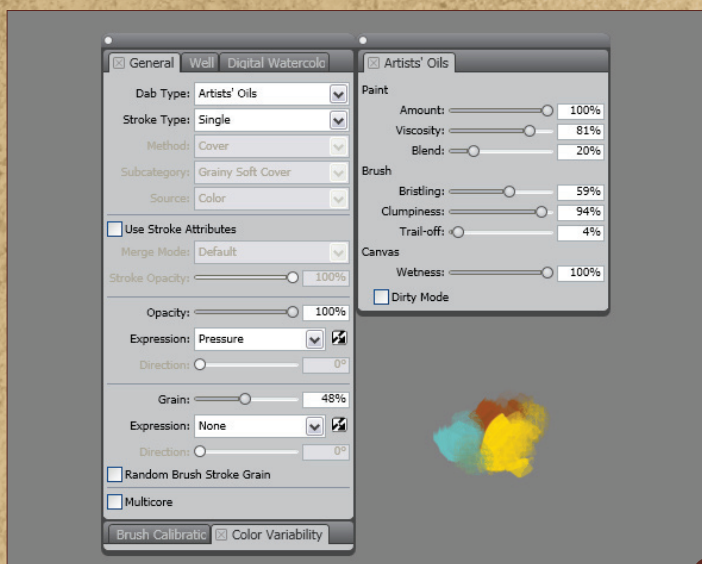
For this and all my brushes I tweak the brush-specific Brush Calibration settings in the Brush Calibration panel so that I get a full range of pressure settings, from feather-light blending to hard lines (**Fig.01**).

The Circular Brush

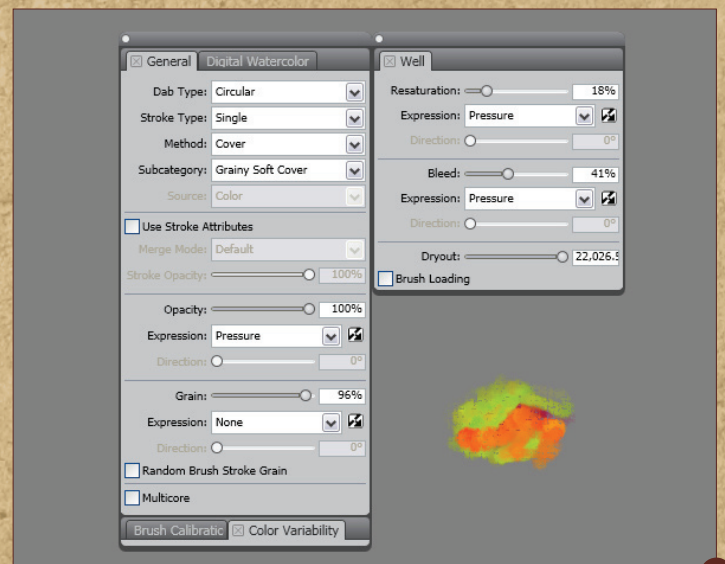
My second basic brush is the circular brush, which is simply a Grainy Soft Cover brush with 100% opacity linked to Pressure. I set the Grain value very high as grain works as expected for this brush variant. I link both Resaturation and Bleed to Pressure and set them medium-low. This allows for blending at low pressures and solid paint when the pen is pressed harder. Again, I spend a little time tweaking Brush Calibration to make sure the brush performs optimally. Dryout I set very high to prevent my strokes running out of paint (**Fig.02**).

Painting Concepts

I roughly sketch a couple of color concepts using the Artists' Oils brush. One character I have in semi-profile and the other is reaching towards the viewer. At this stage I'm not bothered about detail, just overall composition.



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I decide that I like the latter pose best as it provides the best involvement for the viewer (Fig.03).

Choosing the Face and Head

My character concepts are quite small so I decide to do some separate concepts for the face. I spend about 10 minutes on each with the intention of picking the most appealing and using it as a base for my final character. I decide to go with option B in the end. I found A too miserable, C was too devious, D looked more mentally challenged than vampire and E was too reptilian. I included F because he makes me laugh (Fig.04).

Beginning the Painting

Before I start I collect some references. I also find a couple of photos of traditional Chinese clothing and an excellent Chinese hat. In order to get a reference for the hands I take a photo of myself in a similar pose to that of my concept character and then use Smart Blur to remove all the distracting detail. I create a canvas of 700 x 967 pixels and, loosely referencing my collected images, sketch the initial outline of the Jiang Shi using a dark Artists Oils brush. It has next to no detail at this stage and represents just the basic pose (Fig.05).

Rough Color

The next stage is to add rough color using the Artists Oils brush. For my concepts I used a limited range Color Set palette composed of orangey reds, but for the actual painting I'm going to pick colors as necessary from the Temporal Color Palette, which I have assigned to the \ key for ease of use.

I choose a hue contrast between my character and the background, which is a rocky cave wall. This makes him stand out and hopefully appear to be reaching for the viewer. Again, details aren't important right now, but in addition to the composition I'm now looking at defining my character's form via light and shadow. In this case his hat is particularly integral to producing that effect as the shadow it casts over his eyes and forehead gives solidity and form to the focus of the piece – the face. It also portrays a more



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sinister ambience rather than having the whole head lit uniformly.

I make the shadows more desaturated than the directly lit areas, to account for light reflected from the gray-blue walls of the cave. This has the added advantage of providing some linkage between the character and the background. Contrast is good, but if it's overplayed the result can end up looking pasted and flat (**Fig.06**).

Resizing the Image

I'm going to work fairly large in order to be able to easily add fine detail, so I resize the image from 700 x 967 pixels to 3619 x 5000 pixels. It's very important to keep the aspect ratio (X vs. Y) the same to avoid stretching and distortion. When resizing upwards it also blurs your brush strokes, but that's fine because I haven't yet added any detail and any blurring will be painted over later in the process (**Fig.07**).

Making a Start on Detail

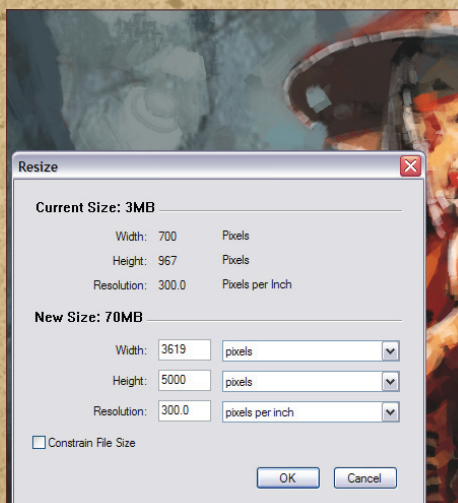
If you've seen any of my other tutorials you'll know that I don't have any sort of strategy for which parts of the painting to detail first. Sometimes I'll begin with the background, other times with the focus and often I'll just jump all over the place on the painting and do a bit here and a bit there until it's all done. For no particular reason, I'm starting on this piece with the face. The rough brush strokes I've added have already taken the face in a pleasing direction. I accentuate the mottling on the cheeks and around the mouth, and tweak the blobby nose to make it lopsided and distorted. As for the mouth itself, in the rough brush strokes I can see a crooked toothy grimace onto which I further define fangs, exposed gums and taut skin (**Fig.08**).

Zombie Clothing

Once I've got the face looking broadly as I want it I zoom out to about 33% and have a play around with the zombie's garments. I have a small black and white photo of a guy in traditional Chinese robes so I use this to inspire some ideas about what the Jiang Shi is wearing. The photo is too small and blurred to make out any details, but that's OK because I'm painting



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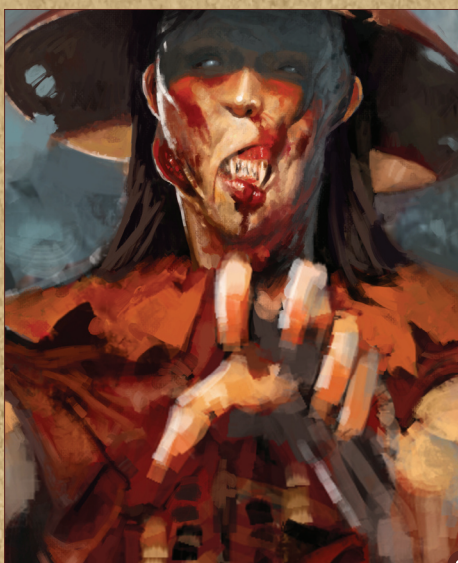
the Jiang Shi's clothing as very ragged and disordered, as you'd expect from a vampire zombie. Because of this I can get away without making the clothing functional and instead build it from folds, creases and swathes of ragged material (**Fig.09**).

Little Touches

I add a bit of embroidery to certain parts of the creature's robes, and a few other intricacies too. I make sure I keep these areas localized otherwise the clothing would appear too fussy (**Fig.10**).

Painting the Arms and Hands

When painting the hands and arms I keep my reference photo handy so that I can keep checking my painting against the photographed pose. One important point is to bear in mind the direction of the light source and where in space your painting elements are situated. Combining this information will give you the position of your highlights and shadows. It's not necessary to try and paint shadows with ray-tracing accuracy, but they need to be roughly in the right place for the painting to read right.



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Using the Artists' Oils brush I refine the hands and arms, using saturated oranges and yellows for directly lit areas and desaturated oranges for shadows (which look blue when viewed against the saturated colors). Because the Jiang Shi is undead I add some areas of decomposing flesh to the arms. Of course, you can get plenty of references from Google for such gruesomeness, but personally I prefer to paint it from my imagination (**Fig.11**)!



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Smoothing the Skin

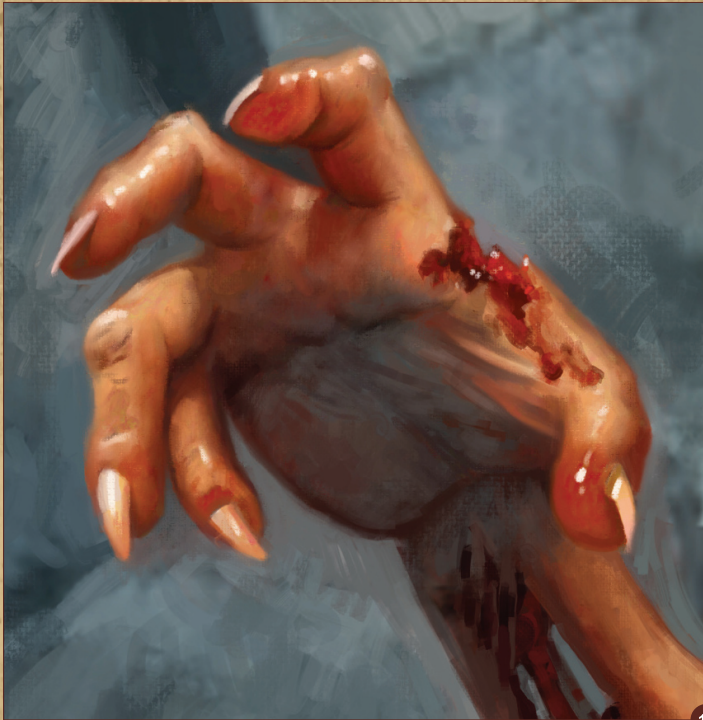
To add fine detail I zoom in to 100% and use my circular brush. Using a hard pressure on this brush produces dense lines whilst a lighter pressure blends existing paint. I also use a third brush for blending only, which is a copy of my circular brush, but with zero saturation. This allows for a smoother blend and should be used sparingly to avoid an excessively digital, fuzzy look (**Fig.12**).



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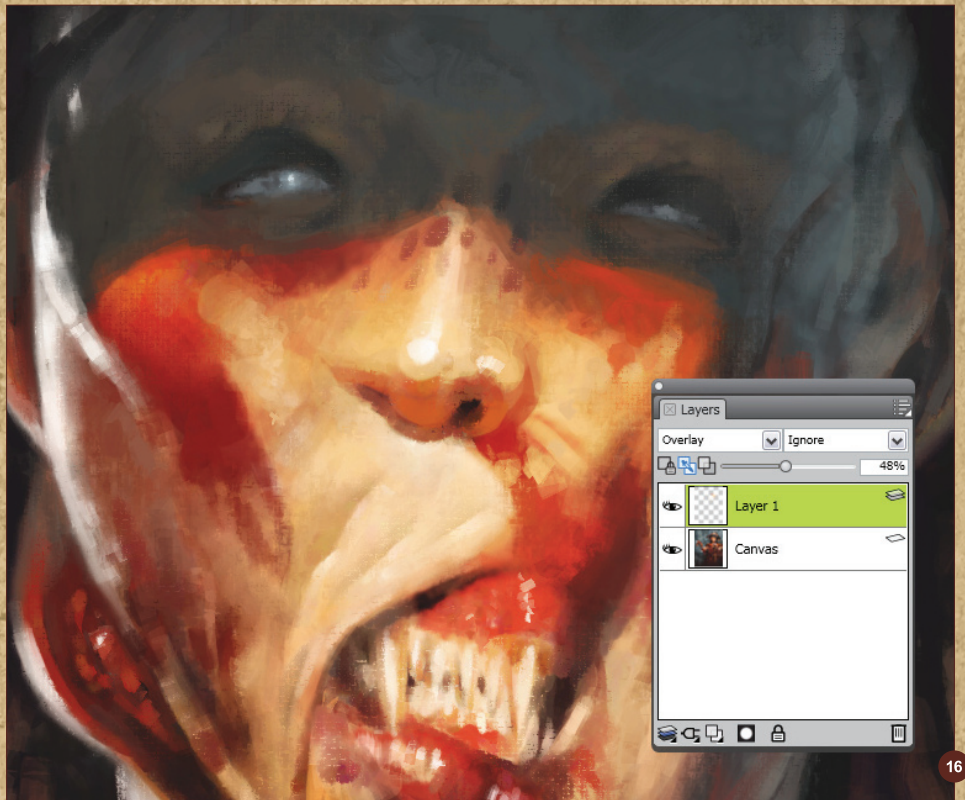
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Spicing Things Up

It's a good idea to make sure all your main elements are present as early as possible, but small changes can be made any time. In this instance I decide that because this guy's hand is looking a bit smooth and ladylike it could do with some roughening up. I take a chunk out of the fleshy part near his thumbs, being mindful to add a variety of reds and a couple of tiny white highlights to make the wound authentic looking. I also add a few more wrinkles to the skin using the circular brush (Fig.13).

Rim Lighting

To add impact I indulge in a bit of fancy lighting by imagining a bright, localized light source to the left of the image. This provides some



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stark rim lighting that helps define the form of our Jiang Shi. I use this technique sparingly because it can easily make objects appear flat (Fig.14).

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Strictly speaking, the lighting on both hands should be identical. However, because the

creature's right hand (on the left as we see it) is pointed towards the edge of the painting and his left hand is nearer the focus (the head), I accentuate the lighting on the left hand and decrease it on the right. This has the twin effect of drawing the viewer's eye to the focus whilst not leading the viewer's eye out of the image via a bright element close to the border (Fig.15).

Using an Overlay Layer

The focus of this piece is the head area of the creature and, to some extent, its upper torso and left hand (on our right). I decide to boost the saturation and value of the Jiang Shi's head and for variation, I use an Overlay layer. I create a layer using the Layers panel and set it to Overlay. Then I set the saturation to 50% and with a high value, saturated orange I make light strokes across the sunlit areas of the face and head. I'm careful not to include the shadow because I want the shadow to remain dim and under-saturated. When I'm done I drop the layer to the canvas and continue as normal (Fig.16).

Final Clothing Detail

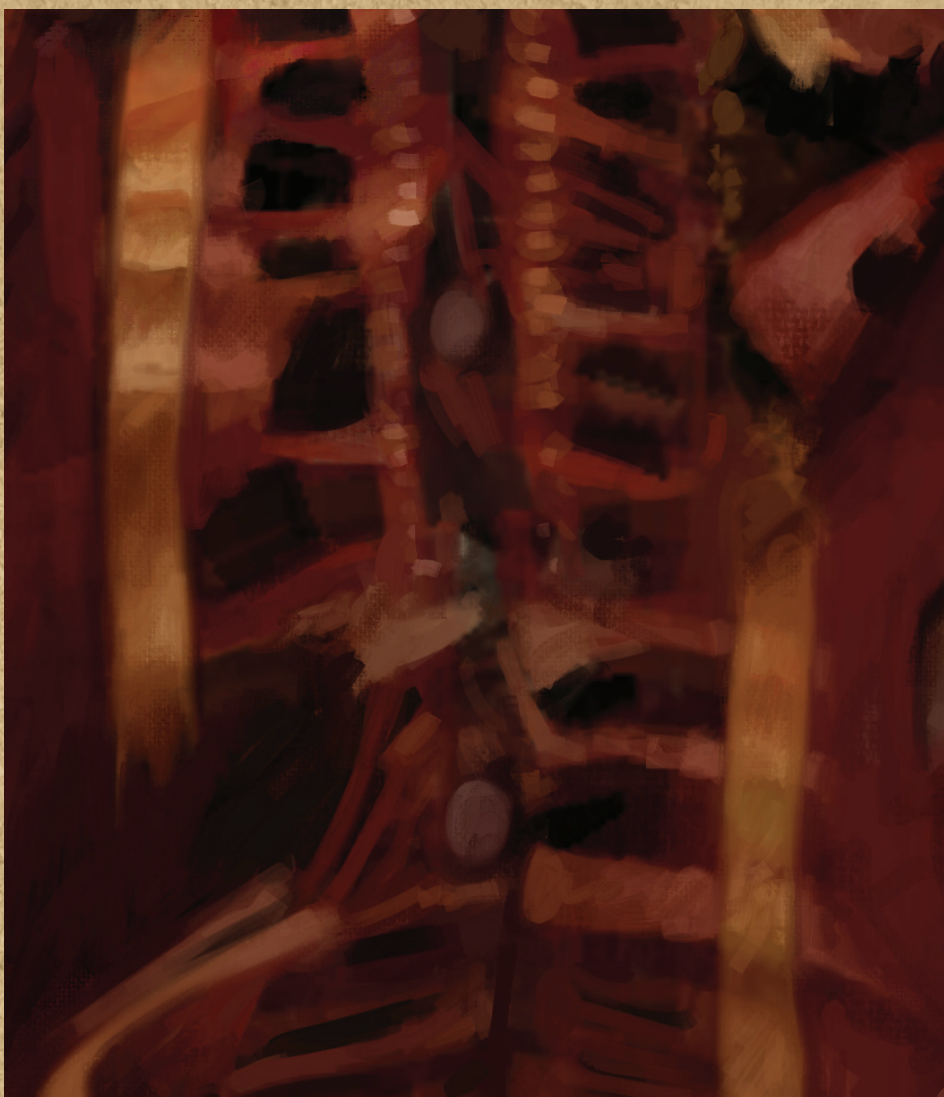
At 100% zoom I tidy up the Jiang Shi's clothing. As I mentioned previously, it's not particularly functional and it wouldn't win any fashion design prizes but overall I think it works as intended. I add a couple of buttons in amongst the tattered strands of material and beef up the embroidery a little so that it catches the light on the uppermost sides of creases (Fig.17).

The Background

So far I've done very little to the background since my original small color sketch. Because I intend this to be a portrait painting, the background need be nothing more than a suggestion of environment. Legend has it that the Jiang Shi often spends his nights in a cave, so I've gone with a generic rock texture. I keep the fine detail to a minimum and use hopefully just enough to convey the location impression I'm after, whilst not overpowering our main subject (Fig.18).

The Straw Hat

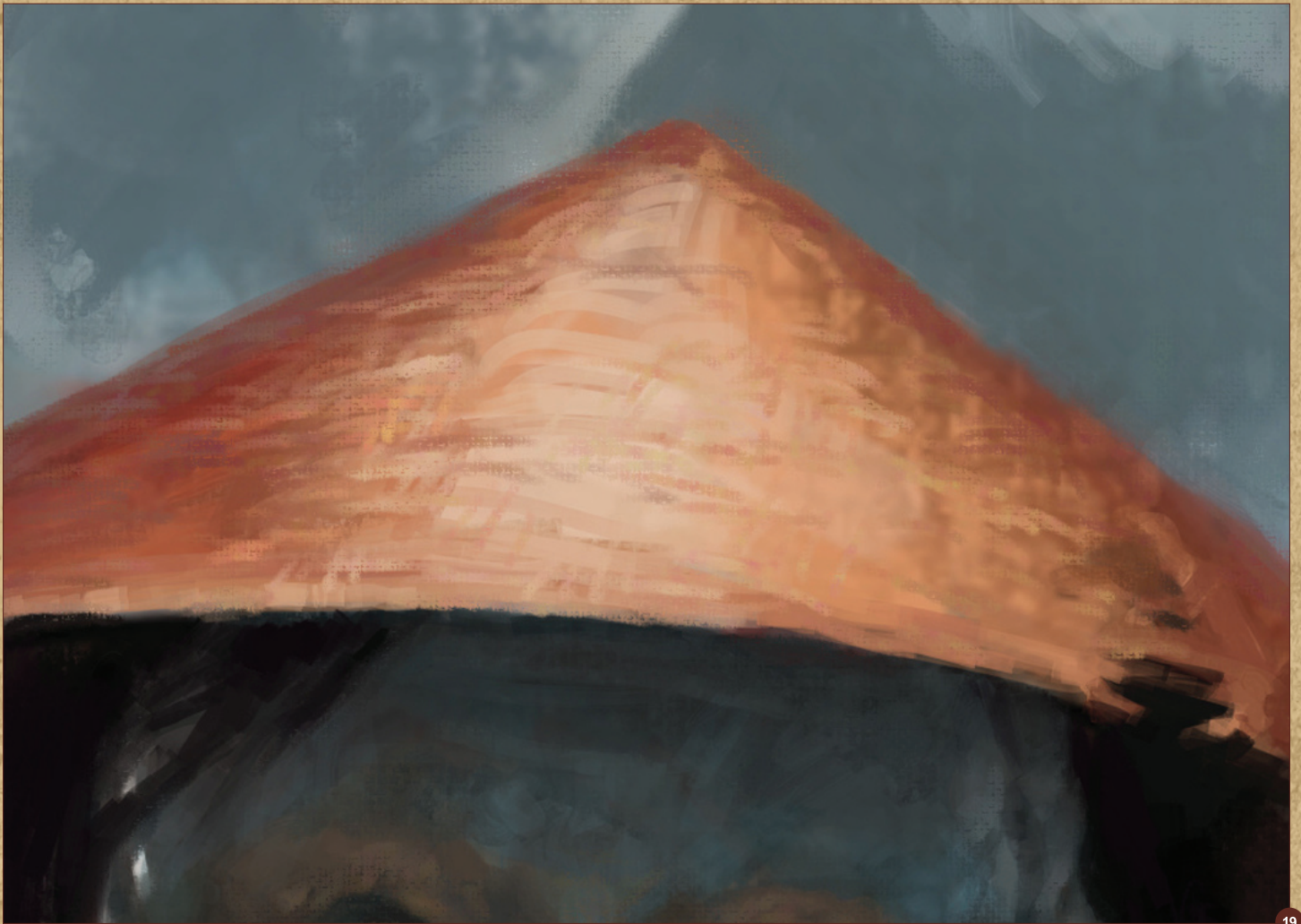
The Jiang Shi's hat in this instance is made from a straw weave. Happily I don't need to paint a thousand strands of straw in order to make that clear. Instead, I suggest the texture by lightly sketching a number of long horizontal and shorter vertical lines. I paint the horizontal lines so that they follow the lateral ellipse of the hat shape, and the vertical lines so they converge at the apex. I am always aware of where my light source is coming from so I adjust the value of the paint color accordingly (Fig.19).



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Applying Finishing Touches

A quick appraisal tells me that it's almost finished so I leave it for a few days and come back to look at it with a fresh perspective. I enhance some of the detail, mostly around the arms and upper clothing, and also adjust the color balance a little in order to bring out the contrasts (**Fig.20**).

The last thing left to do is to resize the image down to its specified dimensions and save it as a 300ppi TIF.

That wraps up this tutorial and I hope you enjoyed it (**Fig.21**).

Simon Dominic Brewer

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Email: si@painterly.co.uk



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"I wanted a piece mixed with something foreboding and something a little sweet"

Jenny Healy is an artist that can create a digital image with depth and darkness. From using layers of soft brush strokes and complementing palettes in Photoshop to re working highlights of details, she talks us through the steps she took to achieve this alluring female.

VICTORIAN VOODOO

MAKING OF BY JENNY HEALY

Making Of Victorian Voodoo

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

With this piece I was going for something moody. I wanted a piece that mixed something foreboding with something a little sweet, and I came up with the idea of paring Victorian fashion with a bit of voodoo flavor. After I decided what I wanted to paint, I put a random color layer down because it's easier for me to work on color. A white canvas is a bit harsh to stare at after a while. I drew everything out with a detailed sketch in Photoshop to get my ideas down (**Fig.01**). Of course, I knew things could change along the way if I found something else that looked or worked better.

Laying Down Lines

Once I got my lines down, on a separate layer I put a layer of a different color underneath the sketch layer to give myself something to start with. I formed a basic plan of color range in my mind and I chose a color for the background that would go with that plan. I laid down the basic values and colors, but after a while I decided I didn't like the position she was in, so I painted her to face straight on. I like to keep parts of a sketch in low opacity and on separate layers as I like to keep track of where everything is placed. Also I can then toggle it on and off when I need it.

Once I was happy with her positioning, I laid down the basics of the hair. I used red/orange to make it pop from the rest of the image (**Fig.02**).

First Details

When painting hair I lay down a dark layer to establish my basic hair shape. Once I have that layer I choose a slightly lighter color, a smaller brush and lay out chunks of hair. I use a soft brush and set it at a low opacity, to help fade and blend the ends out if they come across too harsh. Once that is done I pick a shade that's a bit lighter and use a slightly smaller brush. I keep this whole process up throughout the



painting until I think I have it as detailed as I want it. If I lose some of the darker areas I go back in with the dark color and add some more shades back into the image (**Fig.03**).

Brushes

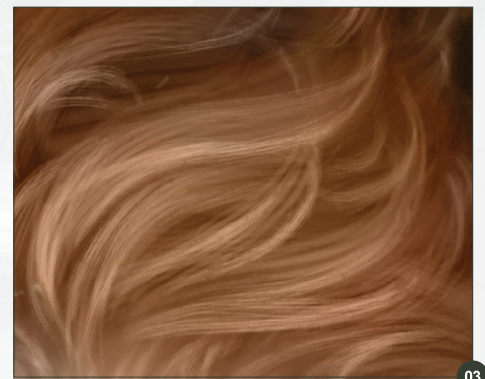
In this stage I added some more basic colors and shapes for the accessories in her hair.

I played a bit with the background color and lighting as well. I also added more colors throughout the piece. A little trick I like to use when my brush strokes are looking a little too rough, is to use median to help them blend a little better. At this point I was still deciding if I wanted her to be slightly frowning or slightly smiling (**Fig.04**).

I was constantly changing her face and adding more depth to the piece. I was also forming more of the basic shapes in her hair and around her face. I like to make custom brushes to achieve different effects in my work, mostly on skin and in my backgrounds. Plus they are just fun to make. In this stage I added more splotches and spots of texture and colors to add more interest; I also blocked out a bit of her eye shapes as well (**Fig.05**).

More Details

I like to skip around the painting, so now I jumped to painting out some of the objects in her hair. At this point the peacock skull didn't have many colors in it, but I figured I would go in



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with a color layer and add more colors throughout the whole image later. I added some cinnamon sticks, white peacock feathers, Star Anise, and some more strange items to help pull off the voodoo vibe. I then moved on to playing around with the background and decided to



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keep it simple since the main focus had so much detail. I decided to add a light colored line to give off the appearance that she has a light source behind her as well (Fig.06 – 07).

I kept up with my usual process of hopping around the whole painting. I added some texture and darkness to her neck to make it seem like she has some sort of choker on, however I wanted it to blend in with her skin. I kept adding details here and there until I thought I was finally finished (Fig.08).

Final Touches

I came back to the image after leaving it for a while, to realize I had made her face and skin tone too harsh and dead. Although I wanted a creepy vibe I also wanted her to have a sweet look, so I added warmth to her skin, softened her face a bit, and added a few more colors here and there. I added another layer set to Color and applied the colors at low opacity so it wouldn't be so bold. Then I decided to finally call the piece finished (Fig.09).

Jenny Healy

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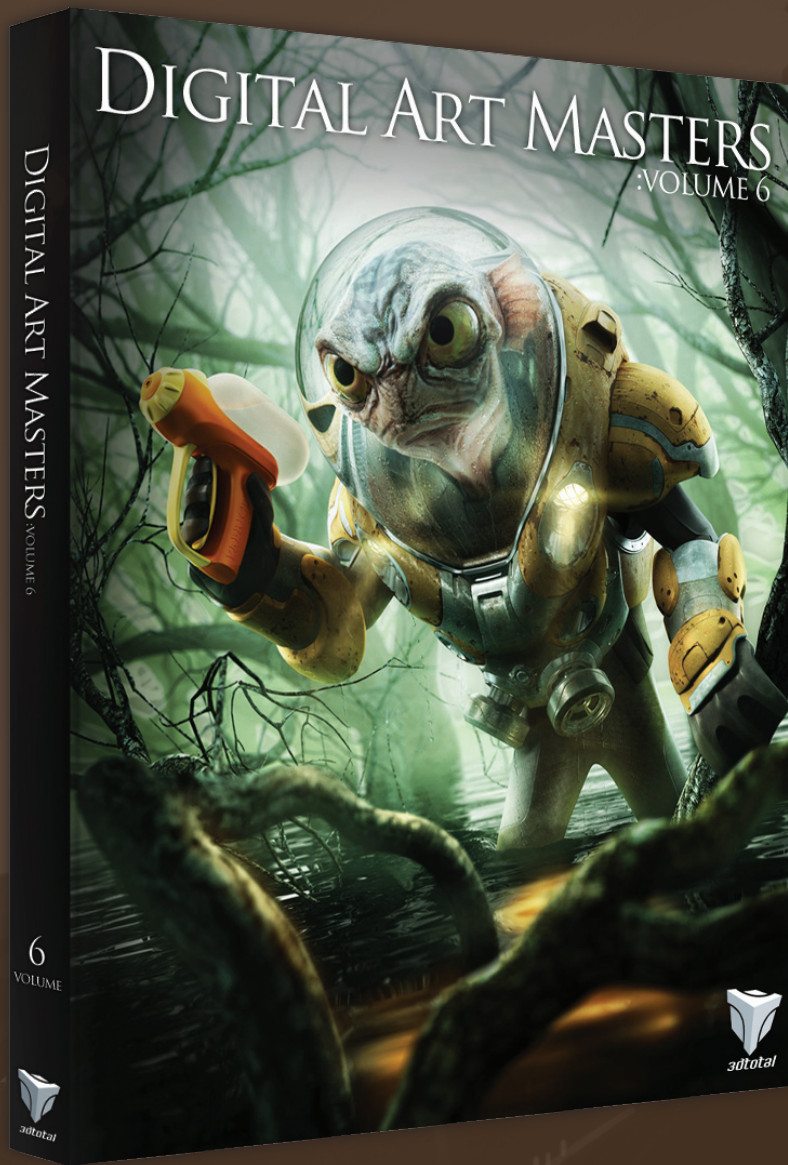
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This month we feature:
"MAKE A WISH"
BY FACUNDO DIAZ



The following shots of the "Make a Wish" book pages are featured here in full-resolution and can be read by zooming in...



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MAKE A WISH

BY FACUNDO DIAZ

JOB TITLE: Freelance Graphic Designer and Illustrator
SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop



INTRODUCTION

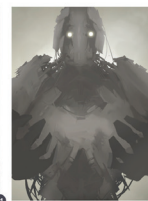
Make a Wish was one of the most interesting works I have had the opportunity to create since working as a digital artist. I had many great ideas in my mind that suggested this powerful scene of a mythical fairy, and a curious destructive robot whose only purpose in life was to battle until the end of his life.

MY PAINTING

Before starting to paint, I tried to imagine the robot's expression. I wanted to portray astonishment and intense curiosity in his face. I knew it was going to be a difficult task because robots and mechs don't have versatile faces and most of the time they have a fixed expression. So I focused first on the head of this giant mech. I made several sketches to find the perfect expression, but I had to start again a number of times because the feeling was wrong. I tried to simulate the mouth, nose and eyebrows to get the look right and at the same time make them part of the robot, but alas with no success. One day I realized that maybe I should tackle the problem from a different direction. The next day I concocted the most unexpressive look I could have created, with just the most important parts of the human face included: the eyes. And the result was brilliant!

It was truly a big challenge to design the face, but finally I ended up with an interesting look. I wanted people to picture the robot's expression by themselves and guess about the curiosity in his eyes. I feel this gives the work a deeper meaning (Fig.01).

When the head was complete I continued with the rest of the body, shoulders, torso and arms, which were quickly painted. The robot needed a strong appearance, so I decided that the whole body should have many broken parts and lots of mechanical gears (Fig.02 - 03). The



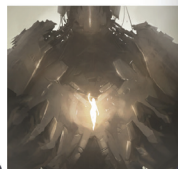
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armor has an old look as if it has been fighting for a long time, suffering the consequences of war caused by the human race. This effect was mainly achieved with the help of textures. Another important aspect of this piece was to reflect the glow emanating from the fairy across the robot's body, so I painted most of the detail into the shadows and reflections (Fig.04 - 05).

IT'S IMPORTANT TO BEAR IN MIND THAT THE MORE LOGICAL THE DESIGN, THE MORE PLAUSIBLE IT WILL BE

The process I went through whilst painting this piece revolved mainly around a classically centered composition, which focuses the view on the most important object, the robot. I then thought about how the armor was going



look. Would he have big shoulders and how would his chest and arms look? I went on to paint the highlights with lighter values where the light was hitting and added darker values where the light was absent. I also added a very smooth and subtle gradient in the background and across the robot's body. This helped the image feel more realistic. I continued shading

the most important parts until I could see logic behind the mechanics, something with volume and a 3D feel (Fig.06).

It's important to bear in mind that the more logical the design, the more plausible it will be. I used a hard edged brush and added as much detail as I could using lighter and darker tones of grey. After this I started experimenting with different colors. Browns were commonly my first option, but eventually I changed to others, such as green and blue. Then I realized that brown is a color that makes the armor look older, so I left it. At the end of the process I used several layers with the Overlay mode to bring up the robot's body, making the final impression more powerful (Fig.06).

The background story is also very important and completes the idea behind the piece. "Not too far away from the present day, a new war rises upon humanity and many mechanical devices, including this robot, are sent to fight with the humans. Having been specially created to aid the war, with their own prefabricated artificial intelligence, one robot stops for a second in the middle of the battle and finds this beautiful, mysterious creature that grants him any wish he so desires. Being curious, the robot holds the creature in his cold broken hands and stares... What could his wish be...?"

I thought of this idea and I came up with so many answers, so many endings and, in fact, I was very happy to discover how much interest people had in this piece. Is he going to wish for eternal peace or maybe save his own life, or is he going to take revenge on those who put him there in the first place?



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ARTIST PORTFOLIO



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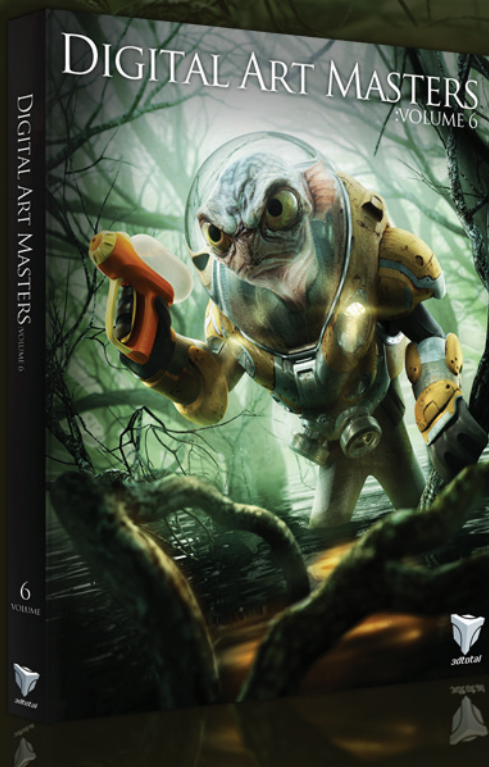
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